

Test-to-stay policy

CDC backs "test-to-stay" strategy for unvaccinated students. **News, Page 4**

Rioter sentenced

U.S. Capitol rioter sentenced to more than five years in prison. **News, Page 4**

Help on the way?

Martin, Sanogo may return when UConn faces PC in Big East opener. **Sports, Page 1**

Messy day



Snow, sleet and freezing rain; high of 45. **Sports, Page 8**

Hartford Courant

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PURDUE PHARMA BANKRUPTCY CASE

Tong: Settlement rejection 'seismic'

Attorney general calls decision a huge win for opioid drug victims

By Seamus McAvoy
Hartford Courant

A federal judge ruled Thursday to reject the controversial bankruptcy settlement of Purdue Pharma, the manufacturer behind opioid drug OxyContin, which

would have shielded members of the Sackler family from facing litigation.

The decision by U.S. District Judge Colleen McMahon in New York relates to an unanswered question over a technical part of bankruptcy law: whether federal bankruptcy court has the authority to release the Sacklers, who are not declaring bankruptcy themselves, from pending and future litigation.

The case was led by a small

group of state attorneys general and spearheaded by Connecticut Attorney General William Tong, who called the decision "a huge win for victims, survivors and their families, and a huge victory for justice and accountability."

"This is a huge case, a huge deal, and this decision is a seismic, pivotal landmark decision," Tong said Friday. "It establishes the primacy of states, and that the rich and the powerful can't hide

behind bankruptcy judges, bankruptcy law and bankruptcy courts to shield themselves."

While Purdue officials said the decision will not affect company operations, "it will delay, and perhaps end, the ability of creditors, communities, and individuals to receive billions in value to abate the opioid crisis," Steve Miller, chairman of the Purdue Pharma L.P. Board of Directors, said in a statement.

The company plans to appeal the decision, Miller wrote.

Purdue filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in 2019 in the wake of thousands of lawsuits that alleged the company ignited the ongoing opioid crisis by encouraging doctors to prescribe their drug OxyContin.

The opioid crisis continues to ravage Connecticut and communities across the country.

Turn to Purdue, Page 2

CORONAVIRUS IN CONNECTICUT



Nine-year-old Louisa gets her second COVID-19 vaccine at a free clinic at the Discovery Science Center in Bridgeport in conjunction with Griffin Hospital. **STAN GODLEWSKI/SPECIAL TO THE COURANT**

Senator defends presence at event

Blumenthal says he was unaware of its Communist Party ties

By Christopher Keating
Hartford Courant

HARTFORD — After receiving increasing criticism by Republicans and conservative national media outlets, U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal said Friday that he would not have attended a recent awards ceremony if he knew it had been tied to the Communist Party.

Blumenthal has been blasted on national websites and television, as well as by state and national Republicans, for the event at a New Haven church, where three friends were being honored. He said he had no idea that the event was linked to the Communist Party.

"My understanding was that this ceremony was strictly a labor event," Blumenthal said Friday in a telephone interview. "If I had known the details, I wouldn't have gone. ... Let me just say very emphatically, I'm a Democrat and a strong believer in American capitalism. I have been consistently a Democrat and a strong supporter and believer in American capitalism."

Regarding ongoing criticism, Blumenthal said, "People are going to do what they're going to do. I'm just going to keep doing my job for the people of Connecticut. There's a lot at stake in the Senate right now — voting rights, the ongoing pandemic, making childcare affordable, lowering prescription drug prices. That's where my focus is."

Blumenthal praised the winners of the annual "Amistad Award," which is administered



Blumenthal

Metrics already high as omicron moves in

Cases, hospitalizations spiking even before new variant's predicted rise

By Alex Puttermann
Hartford Courant

Connecticut continues to record high levels of COVID-19 transmission, even as the omicron variant has not yet become dominant in the state.

Once again Friday, Connecticut reported a COVID-19 positivity rate above 6%, as hospitalizations reached their highest level in more than 10 months. Experts have attributed the state's recent spike in coronavirus transmission to colder weather forcing activi-

ties indoors.

Now, as the omicron variant arrives, things might soon get worse. The new strain is believed to be considerably more contagious than the delta variant, having caused severe outbreaks in South Africa, across much of Europe and now in parts of the United States.

So far, Connecticut has reported 40 cases of the omicron variant, and the true total is surely higher. According to Yale School of Public Health researchers, the delta variant accounts for

between 70% and 88% of recent cases in the areas of the state under their surveillance, with omicron making up the rest.

Nathan Grubaugh, whose lab conducts sequencing on COVID-19 cases in Connecticut, tweeted Thursday that omicron could be dominant in Connecticut "by the end of the month."

Though some evidence suggests the omicron variant causes less severe illness than the delta variant, experts say its high

Turn to COVID-19, Page 2

736

The number of people hospitalized with COVID-19 in Connecticut as of Tuesday, the most at one time since Feb. 10. Coronavirus hospitalizations in the state have nearly quadrupled since the end of October.

GOP: Electronic vaccine cards may expose user data

Republicans in the legislature ramped up their criticism of Gov. Ned Lamont's voluntary electronic COVID-19 vaccination card, saying it could expose a user's data and lead to unvaccinated people being barred from essential businesses. **Connecticut, Page 1**

Opinion **News, 8**
Obituaries **News, 10-11**
Lottery **News, 2**
Classified **News, 11**
Puzzles **Connecticut, 6**
Comics **Connecticut, 5-6**

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CORONAVIRUS IN CONNECTICUT

Sema4 pulls out of testing contract

State loses key partner amid controversy over investments by firm founded by Lamont's wife

By Dave Altamari
and Erica E. Phillips
CT Mirror

Sema4, the Stamford-based laboratory ensnared in a controversy over investments made by a venture capital firm founded by Gov. Ned Lamont's wife, will no longer provide COVID-19 testing, leaving the state without one of its key partners as the demand for testing rises.

Sema4 was one of four companies hired in May 2020 by the state Department of Public Health to manage 23 testing sites across the state, according to DPH officials.

The company notified some of its testing partners this week that it will exit the testing business by mid-January and return to its core business, which is genomic testing.

The company's contracts with the state have come under scrutiny because Annie Lamont's firm, Oak HC/FT, is an investor. Oak HC/FT invested twice in Sema4, which has received millions of dollars from the state to perform COVID testing.

The state's ethics office has found no conflict of interest with

Turn to Testing, Page 3



Sema4 employees work in the company's laboratory in Branford. The Stamford-based health information technology company, which is ensnared in a controversy over investments made by a firm founded by Gov. Ned Lamont's wife, will no longer provide COVID-19 testing. **COURTESY**

FROM PAGE ONE**COVID-19**

from Page 1

level of infectiousness make it a severe threat nonetheless.

"What is good about the omicron [variant] is that it does not seem to be as deadly, per se, as the delta variant," said Dr. Raminendra Walia, chief medical officer at UCFS Healthcare, during a Facebook discussion with Sen. Chris Murphy. "But its transmissibility is much faster than any other form of the virus that's spreading."

Dr. David Banach, an epidemiologist at UConn Health, said this week it's too early to say exactly what the arrival of omicron will mean for Connecticut.

"We're still trying to understand the impact of omicron on severe illness, hospitalizations, mortality," Banach said.

Cases, positivity rate

Connecticut reported 1,443 new COVID-19 cases Friday out of 21,269 tests, for a daily positivity rate of 6.78%. The state's seven-day positivity rate now stands at 5.69%, about even with Thursday and down slightly from last week.

Connecticut has now averaged 1,353 daily COVID-19 cases over the past seven days, also down



The Discovery Science Center in Bridgeport hosted a free clinic in conjunction with Griffin Hospital on Friday.
STAN GODLEWSKI/SPECIAL TO THE COURANT

slightly from last week. Unvaccinated residents have been about five times as likely to test positive in recent weeks as vaccinated residents, according to state numbers.

All eight Connecticut counties — as well as the rest of those in the Northeast region — are currently recording "high" levels of COVID-19 transmission as defined by

the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. With this level of transmission, the CDC advises people to wear a mask in public indoor settings.

Hospitalizations

As of Tuesday, Connecticut has 736 patients hospitalized with COVID-19, up 26 from Thurs-

day most at a time since Feb. 10. Coronavirus hospitalizations in Connecticut have now nearly quadrupled since the end of October.

According to the state, 76.5% of people hospitalized with COVID-19 are unvaccinated. Hospital officials say the rate is even higher when looking specifically at people with severe symptoms.

Deaths

Connecticut reports COVID-19 deaths on Thursdays. This week, the state recorded 56 deaths, bringing its total during the pandemic to 9,002.

As COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations have surged in Connecticut over recent weeks, deaths have risen slightly but still remain far below the levels recorded last winter.

The United States has now recorded 805,076 deaths related to COVID-19, according to Johns Hopkins.

Vaccinations

As of Friday, 86.8% of all Connecticut residents and 95% of those 12 and older had received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose, while 74% of all residents and 83.2% of those 12 and older were fully vaccinated, according to the CDC.

Additionally, about 35.8% of fully vaccinated Connecticut residents 18 or older have received a booster dose.

The CDC warns that booster shots are sometimes misclassified as first doses, likely inflating the reported number of first-dose coverage and understating the true number of people who have received boosters.

Alex Puttermann can be reached at aputtermann@courant.com.

Purdue

from Page 1

Opioids have reportedly been linked to the deaths of more than 500,000 people across the country over the last 20 years. Connecticut confirmed just under 1,400 drug overdose deaths in 2020, and is on pace for similar numbers this year.

To appease creditors, Purdue negotiated a deal that would see members of the Sackler family give up ownership of the company and pay \$4.5 billion to help fight the opioid crisis. The company would be restructured to still sell opioids, but use the profits to fight the crisis and combat addiction.

Tong called this arrangement "absurd and perverse."

"They make ungodly amounts of money and get extraordinarily wealthy off of this crisis, and now they're going to get rich again by selling us remedies and therapies and medicine to overcome the addiction



Writer, director, and actor, Danny Strong, left, creator of the Hulu miniseries "Dopesick" stands with Randy Anderson as he speaks during a protest with advocates for opioid victims outside the Department of Justice on Dec. 3 in Washington. CAROLYN KASTER/AP

tions that they started?" Tong said.

As a linchpin in the agreement, members of the Sackler family would be released from the 860

lawsuits filed against them and others in the future.

Tong, with a handful of other attorneys general, argued that

this kind of release — known as nonconsensual, nondebtor release — shouldn't be allowed, for multiple reasons.

Members of the Sackler family, though in ownership of a company which has declared bankruptcy, are not bankrupt themselves, Tong argued. For example, the family withdrew over \$10 billion from the company between 2008 and 2018, prior to the company's bankruptcy, according to a court hearing.

Tong also argued that states, which have sovereignty, do not count as typical creditors, and should not be forced to give up their legal claims (in this case, against Purdue Pharma) because of a ruling from a federal bankruptcy court. "We never gave up our rights to let some federal bankruptcy judge tell us 'No, you can't prosecute your law enforcement claims against the Sacklers,'" Tong said. "On what basis?"

McMahon's ruling Thursday focused on whether federal

bankruptcy court has the ability to authorize the kind of release the Sackler family would receive under such an agreement.

She indicated her decision would likely be heard next by the U.S. 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals, but Tong has a "high degree of confidence" McMahon's decision will stand.

"We've proven that the Sacklers cannot use the bankruptcy of the company to shield themselves," Tong said. "They can't use the bankruptcy of Purdue Pharma to somehow abuse that process to get themselves a shield against liability going forward."

Tong was joined by attorneys general from California, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont and Washington.

An Associated Press report was included in this story.

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LOTTERY

Friday, Dec. 17

PLAY 3 DAY

2 8 8 WB: 3

PLAY 4 DAY

4 9 8 0 WB: 8

The late lotto numbers were not drawn in time for this edition. For results, please visit courant.com/lottery.

THURSDAY'S LATE NUMBERS

PLAY 3 NIGHT 1 9 3 WB: 7 9 0 8 3 WB: 3

CASH 5

10 14 20 25 34

LUCKY FOR LIFE

8 10 17 38 48 LB: 4

POWERBALL

19 20 40 42 59 PB: 15 PP: 3

Tuesday's est. Lotto jackpot: \$2.6 million

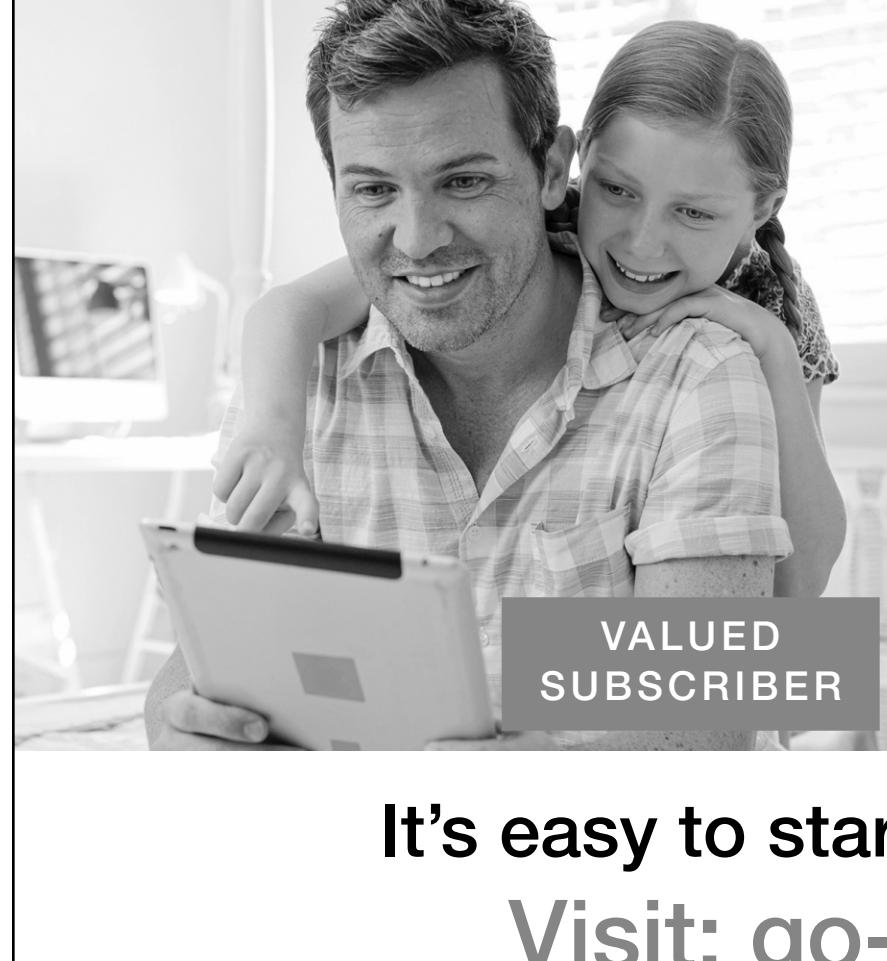
Tonight's est. Powerball jackpot: \$353 million

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FROM PAGE ONE

NEWS BRIEFING

Russia sets out tough demands for security pact with NATO

From news services

MOSCOW — Russia on Friday published draft security demands that NATO deny membership to Ukraine and other former Soviet countries and roll back the alliance's military deployments in Central and Eastern Europe — bold ultimatums that are almost certain to be rejected by the U.S. and its allies.

The proposals, which were submitted to the U.S. and its allies earlier this week, also call for a ban on sending U.S. and Russian warships and aircraft to areas from where they can strike each other's territory, along with a halt to NATO military drills near Russia.

The demand for a written guarantee that Ukraine won't be offered membership already has been rejected by the West, which said Moscow doesn't have a say in NATO's enlargement.

NATO's secretary-general emphasized Friday that any security talks with Moscow would need to take into account NATO concerns and involve Ukraine and other partners. The White House similarly said it's discussing the proposals with U.S. allies and partners, but noted that all countries have the right to determine their future without outside interference.

The publication of the demands — contained in a proposed Russia-U.S. security treaty and a security agreement between Moscow and NATO — comes amid soaring tensions over a Russian troop buildup near Ukraine that has raised fears of an invasion. Moscow has denied it has plans to attack its neighbor but wants legal guarantees precluding NATO expansion and deploying weapons there.

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said Russia's

relations with the U.S. and NATO have approached a "dangerous point," noting that alliance deployments and drills near Russia have raised "unacceptable" threats to its security.

Moscow wants the U.S. to start talks immediately on the proposals in Geneva, he told reporters. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said the alliance had received the Russian documents, and noted that any dialogue with Moscow "would also need to address NATO's concerns about Russia's actions, be based on core principles and documents of European security, and take place in consultation with NATO's European partners, such as Ukraine."

Israel Palestinians: Jewish settlers burst into several villages in the occupied West Bank on Friday, smashing homes and cars and beating up at least two people, Palestinian officials said. The attacks came a day after Palestinian gunmen killed an Israeli man in a shooting ambush in the territory.

The death of settler Yehuda Dimentman, killed when gunmen opened fire on his car near a West Bank settlement outpost late Thursday, threatened to ignite further violence between Palestinian residents and Israeli settlers. Two other passengers in Dimentman's vehicle were lightly wounded.

Ghassan Daghlas, a Palestinian Authority official who monitors settlement activities, said groups of settlers entered several Palestinian villages near the northern city of Nablus early Friday, smashing up cars and homes. Two Palestinians required hospital treatment. In the Palestinian village of Qaryout, settlers broke into one house and tried to abduct a local resident, according to Daghlas.



A person wearing a Santa Claus outfit walks at a Christmas fair Friday in Bucharest, Romania. The Christmas fairs in the Romanian capital are allowing public access to the venues only to the holders of a COVID-19 green pass proving the owner is fully vaccinated or has recovered after the infection. VADIM GHIRDA/AP

Hong Kong election: Hong Kong voters are preparing to vote for the first time this weekend since election laws were changed, amid a dearth of opposition candidates months after the city began cracking down on dissent.

The legislative elections, to be held Sunday, come after Beijing in March passed a resolution for electoral reform in Hong Kong that gives Beijing more control over who is elected to Hong Kong's legislature. Beijing has tightened its grip over the semi-autonomous Chinese city following months of pro-democracy protests in 2019 that at times descended into violent clashes between police and protesters.

Hong Kong later amended its laws in May, reducing the number of directly elected lawmakers to 20 from 35, even as the legislature was expanded from 70 to 90 seats. Most of the lawmakers in the legislature would be appointed by largely pro-Beijing bodies.

Under the new laws, legis-

lative candidates will also be vetted by a largely pro-Beijing committee to ensure that only "patriots" loyal to Beijing rule the city.

Fox Dominion lawsuit: A judge Thursday rejected an attempt by the Rupert Murdoch-owned Fox News Media to dismiss a \$1.6 billion defamation lawsuit brought by Dominion Voting Systems over the network's coverage of the company's role in the 2020 presidential election.

In the ruling, Judge Eric M. Davis of the Superior Court of Delaware, where Fox is incorporated, wrote that he had denied Fox News Media's motion to dismiss the lawsuit because it was "reasonably conceivable that Dominion has a claim for defamation."

Dominion, an election technology company, sued Fox News Media in March, accusing it of advancing lies that devastated its reputation and business. Dominion was at the center of a baseless pro-Trump conspir-

acy theory about rigged voting machines that were promoted by the president and his advisers, including Rudy Giuliani and Sidney Powell, who appeared on Fox News Channel and Fox Business Network.

California population loss: For the first time, California's major population centers of Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay area lost population in the same year, according to data released Friday.

California as a whole lost 173,000 people in the year ending July 1 that included 12 months of the pandemic.

It's just the second time ever the state has reported an annual population loss. But it's the first time Los Angeles County and all nine Bay Area counties lost population in the same annual count.

Los Angeles County is the nation's most populous by a wide margin but the latest tally shows it lost about 67,500 people to fall just under 10 million. The Bay

Area counties, which have a population of about 7.7 million, lost roughly 64,000.

Denmark outbreak: Denmark's prime minister announced Friday that theaters, cinemas, concert halls, amusement parks, museums and art galleries across the country must close down under new restrictions to contain the spread of the coronavirus.

Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said the measures also require stores smaller than 21,528 square feet and restaurants to limit their number of customers.

The partial shutdown order was approved later Friday by Parliament's 21-member Epidemic Committee. Most restrictions apply as of Sunday at 8 a.m.

The Danish government is advising residents to limit social contacts over the Christmas holidays, and urged public and private companies to have employees work from home where possible.

Blumenthal

from Page 1

by the Connecticut People's World Committee. The committee is affiliated with the Communist Party USA, and supporters were celebrating the party's 102nd anniversary.

Noting his hectic schedule that often stretches seven days a week, Blumenthal said, "I go to a lot of events, places, meetings, rallies, and ceremonies in Connecticut. I'm delighted to be invited anywhere, and in this instance, I was invited by local labor unions to honor these three individuals, and that's why I was there. That's pretty much it."

Republicans nationally have been more frequently trying to link Democrats to socialism and communism as part of a political trend, and Blumenthal's appearance has now pushed the issue into Connecticut.

Blumenthal has been mentioned on national web sites like FOX News and the

"I go to a lot of events, places, meetings, rallies, and ceremonies in Connecticut. I'm delighted to be invited anywhere, and in this instance, I was invited by local labor unions to honor these three individuals, and that's why I was there. That's pretty much it."

— U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal

National Review, along with a FOX Business program by financial commentator Larry Kudlow, a Connecticut Republican who once publicly considered running against Blumenthal in 2016. He was also criticized in an editorial by the conservative New York Post.

Kudlow said he was surprised that Blumenthal had attended the recent awards event, saying, "I just find that incredible."

On Friday, the controversy spilled into the 2022 campaign as the National Republican Senatorial Committee, which is trying to regain the majority in the chamber, weighed in.

"This is how far left and radical today's Democrat Party has gone," said spokeswoman Lizzie Litzow.

"Democrats are so out of touch with what Americans want and need. The hard-working people of Connecticut deserve better."

At the event, Blumenthal said he was attending to honor three friends who were receiving awards, including Democratic state Senator Julie Kushner of Danbury and Pastor Rodney Wade of the Long Hill Bible Church in Waterbury. The third honoree was SEIU union activist Azucena Santiago, whom Blumenthal lauded for "standing up to McDonald's" as a worker at the Interstate 95 service plaza in the push for unionization in the restaurant industry.

Blumenthal spoke for seven minutes at the event that has been posted on

Facebook that lasts for more than 2 hours and 45 minutes.

"You don't have to agree with anyone or everyone, with any party or any particular union or organization," Blumenthal told the crowd. "I'm here to honor the great tradition of activism and standing up for individual workers that is represented by the three honorees here. ... I've known and worked with all of them. They are extraordinary examples of courage, grace under pressure, ferocious fighting for the rights of working people, and for democracy."

Blumenthal, 75, has served in the U.S. Senate since 2011 and is seeking reelection to a third term in 2022.

He urged the crowd to continue their activism like a nationally known civil rights

leader.

"We need to make good trouble in the tradition of John Lewis," Blumenthal said.

He also called again for ending the filibuster, a long-time rule where 60 votes are often needed in the U.S. Senate for important issues to pass. Blumenthal was among 12 Democrats in the 100-member Senate who voted in favor of ending the filibuster when he was a freshman lawmaker.

In an interview Friday, Blumenthal said it was not unusual for him to attend an event.

"I'm delighted to be invited anywhere in Connecticut," he said. "I go almost everywhere."

State Republican chairman Ben Proto said he was surprised that Blumenthal attended the event.

"We know the Democratic Party is moving further and further to the left and becoming more socialist," Proto said in an interview. "I don't know if they get to communism. ... At the end of

the day, he is an example of where the Democratic Party is going, which is further and further to the left."

Proto added, "I don't care how good a friend you are. You either believe in the cause you're there for or you don't. If you're showing up, then you've got to have some inkling and leaning to that position. If they were giving one of his friends an award from the KKK, would he show up to give them the award?"

Proto noted that other prominent Democrats did not attend the awards ceremony.

"I know we're well past the McCarthy era, but people's lives were ruined 60, 70 years ago simply because they had a friend who was a communist," Proto said. "He could have simply sent Julie [Kushner] a letter, saying, 'Hey, congratulations.' I was kind of surprised when I saw it."

Christopher Keating can be reached at ckeating@courant.com

Testing

from Page 1

the contract. Under a policy put in place in 2019 and backed by the state's Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board, the Lamonts sought to insulate their personal financial interest from state business decisions.

Lamont's critics say the governor, who recused himself from state transactions with companies in which his wife is invested, should have barred Sema4 from providing COVID testing; they also question whether the Lamonts will eventually profit from their investment in Sema4. The Lamonts have pledged to donate any profits they make to charity.

Gov. Lamont's spokesman Max Reiss said Friday

that the administration "had zero input into Sema4's decision to stop its COVID testing operation."

It is unclear how much Sema4's current contract, signed in July of 2021, is worth. In a filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission this week, informing investors of its plans to discontinue COVID-19 testing, Sema4 said it "expects to incur inventory write-off charges" in the range of \$600,000 to \$800,000 this year. It did not say how much ending its state contracts would impact the company's revenue.

Sema4 is one of the main testing contractors for the state. Of the 23 state testing sites, Sema4 is running 15, located from Kent to Stonington and from Stamford to Killingly, according to DPH officials.

"We received an email notification from SEMA4 on Wednesday," DPH spokesman Christopher Boyle said Friday. "We appreciate all the work SEMA4 has done throughout the pandemic to help build the state's testing capacity. We respect their business decision and are in the process of identifying vendors from the master contract who can take on the work."

Sema4's decision comes as the demand for testing has skyrocketed. Over the past two weeks, as the holidays approached and the Omicron variant began spreading in Connecticut, the number of COVID tests has tripled in Connecticut.

On Friday, Susan Hacking, a member of DPH's Joint Operating Team, sent a memo to all health directors confirming Sema4 will stop

doing testing in mid-January.

"By now many of you have heard that effective January 15th, 2022, Sema4 will discontinue its COVID-19 testing services," Hacking wrote. "A few of you have contacted me and are concerned about this news, so I wanted to let you to know that we are talking with Sema4 and the other testing providers on the state contract on how best to transition the state supported testing sites. Once we know more, we will work with each of you to maintain continuity of state supported testing. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions."

A spokesman for Sema4 did not immediately respond to requests for comment Friday.

In its SEC filing this week, Sema4 said it would cease

offering COVID-19 testing services as of March 31, 2022. "Nationwide and regionallab capacity for COVID-19 testing has increased since the Company entered the market in the first half of 2020," the filing read. "Management believes it is the appropriate time to discontinue this line of services and dedicate all of the Company's efforts and resources on its core mission to transform health care by using artificial intelligence to enable the delivery of precision medicine as the standard of care."

Lamont has said that neither he nor his wife had any involvement in Sema4 getting testing contracts and that it was the comptroller's office that handled the RFP for the original testing contract. Comptroller Kevin Lembo told the CT Mirror last month that no one inter-

fested in his office's awarding of the contracts. Lembo also acknowledged he wasn't aware of Annie Lamont's investments in Sema4 until after the contract was already signed.

In a statement to the CT Mirror last month, Annie Lamont said her family had "no involvement" with the Sema4 contract.

"Decisions involving Sema4 and the terms of the testing contract were negotiated by the Office of the Comptroller without any involvement from me or Ned," the statement reads. "Finally, I have recused myself from all decisions relating to our investment in this company. To date, I have not earned any profit from the investment in Sema4, and I will keep our promise and pledge to donate any and all proceeds to charity."

WORLD & NATION

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CDC endorses 'test-to-stay' strategy

Policy aims to keep kids in school after exposure to virus

By Noah Weiland
and Emily Antes
The New York Times

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Friday that unvaccinated students exposed to the coronavirus no longer need to miss school if they repeatedly test negative for the virus in the days after, allowing them to remain in class and school activities.

The new guidance, known as the "test to stay" protocol, would ease the burden on children who have been expected to stay home if a close contact tests positive for the virus and on parents who have had to scramble to retrieve children from school or find day care.

Although some schools and districts are already using the "test-to-stay" approach, the CDC has not previously endorsed it, citing a lack of evidence. On Friday, the agency released studies from two counties, one in California and the other in Illinois, that effectively tested the test-to-stay protocol and found that it worked.

The studies were conducted before the fast-moving omicron variant began spreading in the United States. Scientists are still investigating many basic questions about the variant, some of which could affect the assessment of in-school transmission risks.

The policy, hinted at in the winter COVID-19 plan that President Joe Biden unveiled earlier this month, still calls on students to wear masks and socially distance,



Parents complete forms Dec. 7 to allow random COVID-19 testing for students at a New York school. MARK LENNIHAN/AP

and applies only to those who remain asymptomatic as they test for the virus. Until now, unvaccinated students were expected to quarantine at home for as long as two weeks after exposure.

Vaccinated students with exposures have generally been allowed to remain in school as long as they are asymptomatic and wear a mask. The CDC recommends that vaccinated people get tested five to seven days after close contact with someone who has a suspected or confirmed case of the virus.

The agency Friday released studies from the

two counties that effectively tested the test-to-stay protocol. In Los Angeles, students at schools that did not participate in the pilot program, and who had to quarantine, lost an estimated 92,455 in-person school days between Sept. 20 and Oct. 31, while students exposed to the virus in schools trying out the program lost no days. Schools that used test-to-stay also did not see increases in virus rates among students.

In Lake County, Illinois, researchers estimated that up to 8,152 in-person learning days were saved between August and October in schools that partici-

pated in the program. Of the 16 students in the program who tested positive for the virus in the two weeks after exposure, none appeared to transmit it to others at school, the report said.

The California students were tested twice in the week after exposure; the Illinois students were tested four times.

Dr. Rochelle Walensky, the CDC director, said at a White House news conference Friday that the protocol was "promising" and "now proven." She added that because "test to stay" was only studied in schools, the CDC did not yet have evidence about its effectiveness in other settings.

Public health experts cheered the move, saying it struck the right balance between keeping children safe and allowing them to continue with in-person learning.

"The test-to-stay programs are really good at balancing the costs and benefits," said Zoe McLaren, a health policy expert at the School of Public Policy at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. She added, "What the test-to-stay program does is help us keep COVID cases down, while also trying to make sure we keep kids in school as much as possible, which

I think is really important."

Research suggests that the risk of in-school transmission is relatively low when schools take a variety of precautions, including requiring masks and improving ventilation. But that research, like the two studies the CDC released Friday, was conducted before the omicron variant emerged.

Meanwhile, Pfizer said Friday it was changing plans and testing three doses of its COVID-19 vaccine in babies and preschoolers after the usual two shots didn't appear strong enough for some of the children.

Pfizer announced the change after a preliminary analysis found 2- to 4-year-olds didn't have as strong an immune response as expected to the very low-dose shots the company is testing in the youngest children.

It's disappointing news for families anxious to vaccinate their tots. Pfizer had expected data on how well the vaccines were working in children under 5 by year's end, and it's not clear how long the change will delay a final answer.

Pfizer and its partner BioNTech said if the three-dose study is successful, they plan to apply for emergency authorization in the first half of 2022.

A kidsize version of Pfizer's vaccine is available for 5- to 11-year-olds, one that's a third of the dose given to people 12 and older.

For children younger than 5, Pfizer is testing an even smaller dose, just 3 micrograms or a tenth of the adult dose.

Associated Press contributed.

Capitol rioter sentenced to over 5 years in prison

Term is longest yet handed out for the Jan. 6 insurrection

By Colleen Long
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A Capitol rioter who attacked police officers working to hold back the angry pro-Trump mob on Jan. 6 was sentenced Friday to more than five years behind bars, the most so far for anyone sentenced in the insurrection.

Robert Palmer, 54, of Largo, Florida, wept as he told U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan that he recently watched a video of his actions that day and could not believe what he was seeing.

"Your honor, I'm really, really ashamed of what I did," he said through tears.

Palmer was one of several rioters sentenced on Friday in District of Columbia court for their actions that day, when the angry mob descended to disrupt the certification of Joe Biden's presidential election victory following a rally by then-President Donald Trump. Scores of police were beaten and bloodied, five people died and there was about \$1.5 million in

damage done to the U.S. Capitol. Palmer is the 65th defendant to be sentenced overall. More than 700 people have been charged.

A college student who posted online that "Infamy is just as good as fame" after she climbed through a broken window at the Capitol was sentenced to a month in jail for her actions. Gracyn Courtright, 23, of Hurricane, West Virginia, didn't injure anyone, and her sentence reflected that.

But Palmer made his way to the front line during the chaos and started to attack, throwing a wooden plank, spraying a fire extinguisher, and hurling it when it was done. He roamed around for other objects, prosecutors said. He was briefly pepper-sprayed by police before he attacked officers again with a pole. He pleaded guilty to attacking officers.

Palmer said in a handwritten letter to the judge that he felt betrayed by Trump and his allies who fed them conspiracy theories.

"Trump supporters were lied to by those at the time who had great power," he wrote. "They kept spitting out the false narrative about a stolen election and how it was 'our duty' to stand up to tyranny."

Palmer, who has been held

at the D.C. jail among fetid conditions that prompted a review by authorities, said it wasn't fair that he be punished so severely when the ringleaders aren't even behind bars.

The judge agreed — to a point. "It is true that the people who exhorted you and encouraged you and rallied you to go and take action have not been charged," she said. "That is not the court's decision. I have my opinions but they are not relevant."

Before Palmer's sentencing of 63 months, the longest prison term handed down for a Capitol rioter was 41 months. That was the sentence received by both Jacob Chansley, the Arizona man who wore a horned fur hat, bare chest and face paint inside the Capitol; and New Jersey gym owner Scott Fairlamb, the first person to be sentenced for assaulting a law enforcement officer during the riot.

"It has to be made clear ... trying to stop the peaceful transition of power and assaulting law enforcement officers is going to be met with certain punishment," the judge said. "There are going to be consequences. I'm not making an example of you. I'm sentencing you for the conduct you did."

After the riot, she dug in on social media when she was criticized for her actions, before eventually deleting her accounts.



Insurrectionists loyal to then-President Donald Trump swarm the Capitol on Jan. 6 in Washington. Robert Palmer was sentenced to more than five years in prison. MANUEL BALCE CENETA/AP

Courtright, a University of Kentucky student, sobbed as she told U.S. District Court Judge Christopher Cooper that "if I could take back anything in my life it would be my actions on Jan. 6."

She posted photos of herself online — like scores of other rioters — reveling in the moment. "Can't wait to tell my grandkids I was here!" she wrote, and inside the Senate chamber, she was photographed holding a "Members only" sign.

After the riot, she dug in on social media when she was criticized for her actions, before eventually deleting her accounts.

Her attorney on Friday argued she had no idea what she was doing and that she wasn't a political activist — she didn't even vote in the election she was there to protest. The judge seized on that during his remarks.

Participating in a democracy isn't like going to a University of Kentucky game and "rooting for a team just because of the color of their jerseys," the judge said. "It's certainly not resorting to violence when your team doesn't win the game," he told Courtright.

Cooper also noted that Courtright made it to the

floor of the Senate at about the exact time that Ashli Babbitt, on the House side, was shot dead.

"Do you know how many people died on Jan. 6? Five. Including Ms. Babbitt?" he asked. "Five."

"Do you know how many Capitol police officers committed suicide after Jan. 6, harmed from the trauma of that day? Four," the judge added. "So was it cool to have been there?"

"No," she answered emphatically.

The judge sentenced her to 30 days in prison, one year of supervised release, and 60 hours of community service.

Stone says he invoked 5th Amendment at Jan. 6 deposition

By Mary Clare Jalonick
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Roger Stone, a longtime confidant of former President Donald Trump, says he has asserted his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination in an interview with the House panel investigating the Jan. 6 Capitol insurrection.

Stone — who was convicted in 2019 of lying to Congress, but subsequently pardoned by Trump — told reporters as he left the depo-

sition Friday that "I did my civic duty and I responded as required by law" but that he invoked his Fifth Amendment rights to every question.

The committee subpoenaed Stone last month, noting that he spoke at rallies on the day before the insurrection and used members of a far-right extremist group, the Oath Keepers, as personal security guards while he was in Washington. Several members of that militia group broke into the

Capitol on Jan. 6, along with hundreds of other supporters of Trump, and have been charged with conspiring to block the certification of the vote.

Stone is one of several in Trump's inner circle who have refused to answer questions from the committee. The House has already held two of Trump's top allies — Steve Bannon and former White House chief of staff Mark Meadows — in contempt for not cooperating. But many more

witnesses have cooperated. The panel has done around 300 interviews as it seeks to create a comprehensive record of the attack.

It is unclear if the panel will vote to hold Stone in contempt. The committee's leaders have said that they believe witnesses asserting Fifth Amendment rights should be doing so to avoid self-incrimination. Stone told reporters afterward that he did not believe he did anything wrong, but that he asserted the Fifth because

he believes Democrats will conspire against him.

A spokesman for the panel did not have immediate comment on Stone.

Stone was convicted in special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation of lying to Congress about his efforts to gather inside information about Russia-hacked Democratic emails that were published by WikiLeaks in the run-up to the 2016 presidential election. Trump pardoned him in his final weeks in office.



Roger Stone addresses reporters Friday in Washington. ANNA MONEYMAKER/GETTY

WORLD & NATION

In unusual weather, a usual suspect

Experts examining climate change's role in wild week

By Brad Plumer, Winston Choi-Schagrin and Hiroko Tabuchi
The New York Times

Hurricane-force gusts in nine states. Immense dust storms in Colorado and wind-fanned wildfires in Kansas. The first-ever December tornadoes observed in Minnesota and western Iowa. Temperatures soaring past 70 degrees in cities like Omaha, Nebraska, and Des Moines, Iowa, a record.

The powerful storm that swept through the Midwest on Wednesday was extraordinary in many respects, with 100 million Americans under some form of weather alert.

"We've not seen that combination of heat and dry, followed by an extended period of strong wind," said Grady Dixon, who teaches geosciences at Fort Hays State University in Kansas. "It was so unusual for the month of December — it has to make you ask questions."

One key question is what role global warming might have played in fueling such an extreme weather event. Scientists cautioned that it could prove difficult, if not impossible, to untangle the precise links between this week's storm and climate change, although it appeared to be helped in part by record warmth across much of the country.

And there is evidence that the United States can expect more unusual severe storms as the planet heats up, potentially striking in new places or at unex-



A memorial in front of a courthouse in Mayfield, Kentucky, honors those lost in tornadoes on Dec. 10. **BRANDON BELL/GETTY**

pected times of the year. While some questions are difficult to answer — such as whether that will mean more tornadoes in the future — scientists say the risks of increasingly wild weather make it all the more urgent that cities and states take steps to protect people and property.

"We do expect an increase in favorable conditions for severe storms," said John Allen, an associate professor of meteorology at Central Michigan University.

Two key ingredients for severe storms are warm, moist air creating updrafts and wind shear, a change in wind speed and direction

that can allow storms to become stronger. But storms also need a trigger to form, such as a hot day or a cold front, which can be somewhat more unpredictable, Allen said.

Some studies have concluded that as global warming advances, driven by the burning of fossil fuels, favorable conditions for severe storms in the United States will increase this century. The increase is expected to be more pronounced during cooler seasons that don't traditionally see as many thunderstorms, such as early spring, fall and winter, thanks to the presence of more warm,

humid air during periods of higher wind shear.

It remains less certain as to whether those increasingly severe storms might lead to more tornadoes. These complex events are harder to model, and so far there doesn't appear to be clear evidence that, for instance, tornadoes have changed in frequency or intensity over the past 40 to 60 years.

Even so, scientists have seen some evidence that tornado behavior seems to be shifting. In recent years tornadoes seem to be occurring in greater "clusters," and the region known as tornado alley in the Great

Plains, where most tornadoes occur, appears to be shifting eastward.

There's also the possibility that derechos — groups of intense and fast-moving windstorms like those that caused havoc in the Midwest on Wednesday — may shift into new regions or even become more common as the planet warms, particularly during cooler seasons when they haven't traditionally been as common.

Derechos "are primarily a summer phenomenon," said Harold Brooks, a senior research scientist at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Severe Storms

Laboratory. "If you make it more summery, you might expect them to increase."

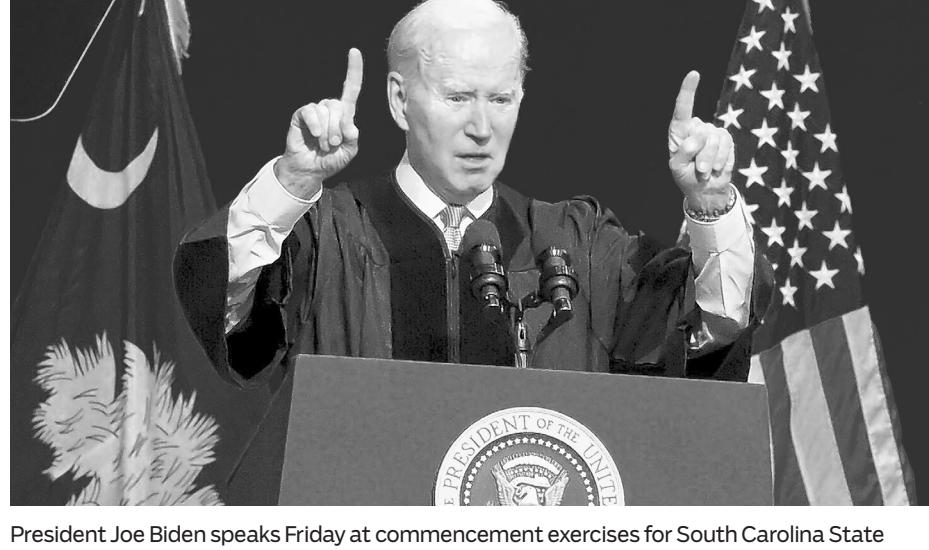
The week's ominous weather shocked even professional weather watchers. Zach Sharpe, who heads the Iowa Storm Chasing Network, said he had never experienced such bizarre weather in December.

Much of Wednesday was unseasonably warm — but once the storm front approached, a blast of cold air brought instantly freezing temperatures and 80 mph winds. "It was eerie to be chasing tornadoes 10 days before Christmas," Sharpe said. "We were out in our vehicles, listening to 'Jingle Bells,' while tornado sirens were going off."

Still, scientists said, this week's storm was so unusual and had so many different forces behind it, including a strong jet stream moving across the central states, that it can be difficult to disentangle the effect of global warming compared with other factors like La Niña, an intermittent climate phenomenon in the Pacific Ocean that can influence winter storms.

For some scientists, however, arguing about the precise role of climate change is only part of the story. Whether or not scientists ultimately settle on an answer, they say, society should do as much as possible to reduce vulnerability to extreme weather.

"We might not know exactly how climate change is going to affect tornadoes going forward, but we do know that there are lots of things we can do to protect people today," said Stephen Strader, a disaster scientist at Villanova University in Pennsylvania.



President Joe Biden speaks Friday at commencement exercises for South Carolina State University, in Orangeburg, S.C. **MEG KENNARD/AP**

In SC, Biden pledges fight for voting rights, police reform

By Jim Tankersley
The New York Times

ORANGEBURG, S.C. — President Joe Biden saluted a class of graduates at South Carolina State University on Friday and presented a diploma to one of the school's most prominent alumni, Rep. James Clyburn, D-S.C., whose endorsement helped save Biden's presidential bid in 2020.

But his appearance at a historically Black university was largely an ode to the Black voters who have nurtured his political career, a denunciation of racism and a vow to pass a wide range of legislation to help Black communities — legislation that has largely stalled near the end of Biden's first year in office.

Chief among those bills is an effort to expand voting rights, such as a bill recently blocked by Senate Republicans that would have restored parts of the landmark Voting Rights Act, in the face of efforts by Republican-led states to restrict access to voting. Democrats have pressed for Senate action on that legislation by year's end but have yet to

find agreement on any plan that could bypass a Republican filibuster.

Biden promised to find a path forward for the effort, although he did not detail how.

"We have to protect that sacred right to vote, for God's sake," he said. "We're going to keep up the fight until we get it done."

Biden used the speech to champion provisions in one of the biggest victories of his presidency: an infrastructure bill he signed into law this fall, including money to replace lead-water pipes that poison Black children, to create jobs for Black engineers and to bring high-speed internet to every community in the country.

He also acknowledged that he had not delivered on other promises he made to Black voters, who were a pillar of his victories in the Democratic primaries and the general election.

He told the more than 75 graduates and their families that "the fight's not over!" on legislation to overhaul policing in the United States. Bipartisan negotiations on a policing bill, led in part by Sen.

Tim Scott, R-S.C., collapsed in September with both parties declaring that their differences were too wide to bridge.

The appearance of a sitting president at a fall commencement ceremony was entirely the work of Clyburn, who graduated from South Carolina State in 1961 but did not walk across a stage to receive his diploma. He had been invited by the school to do so this year, to celebrate the 60th anniversary of earning his diploma, and to deliver the keynote address. But Clyburn had a better idea, he told the graduates.

He called Cedric Richmond, director of Biden's Office of Public Engagement, to tell him he would be marching with the graduating class to receive his diploma — and he wanted help securing the speaker.

"I told him," Clyburn said, "I think it would be great to get my degree from the president of the United States, Joe Biden."

Biden, he said, immediately accepted.

Clyburn urged graduates to thank their parents and other supporters of their college journeys.

Minnesota ex-cop on Wright death: 'I'm sorry it happened'

By Amy Forliti and Scott Bauer
Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — The former suburban Minneapolis police officer who shot and killed Daunte Wright testified at her manslaughter trial Friday that she wouldn't have pulled over his car if she hadn't been training another officer and that she hadn't planned to use deadly force that day.

Under questioning by a prosecutor, Kim Potter sobbed during her sometimes emotional testimony, saying at times "I didn't want to hurt anybody," and later, "I'm sorry it happened."

Potter was the final witness before the defense rested at the end of the second week of testimony. She said she shot Wright on April 11 in Brooklyn Center in a moment of chaos after he tried to leave the scene as she and other officers were trying to arrest him on an outstanding warrant for a weapons violation.

Potter, 49, said she meant to use her Taser to subdue Wright when he pulled away from the officers and got back into his car, but shot him once with her handgun instead.

Potter's attorneys argued that she made a mistake but also would have been justified in using deadly force if she had meant to because another officer was at risk of being dragged by Wright's car. Potter testified that she decided to use her Taser because of the scared look she saw in one of the other two officer's eyes.

Potter said she yelled, "Taser!" repeatedly so the other officers, who were trying to get Wright out of his car, would disengage. Prosecutors say Potter was an experienced officer who had extensive training in Taser use and the use of deadly force, and that her actions were unreasonable.

During cross-exam-



Dallas Bryant, brother of Daunte Wright, wears a mask demanding justice for his brother Friday in the trial of ex-Officer Kim Potter in Minneapolis. **CHRISTIAN MONTERROSA/AP**

ination, prosecutor Erin Eldridge drove hard at Potter's training, getting her to agree that her use-of-force training was a "key component" to being an officer. Potter testified that she was also trained on when to use force and how much to use, and that there was a policy that dictated what officers could or could not do.

Potter was shown photos of her Taser and firearm next to one another. The Taser was yellow and her gun was black. Eldridge noted that the loaded gun is heavier than the Taser.

"So you went out on the street with a Taser, not knowing what that Taser did?" Eldridge asked Potter.

"I would assume that on the day I worked, I would know. But I don't know — it's been months now," Potter responded.

Potter testified under questioning by one of her lawyers that she had no training on "weapons confusion," saying it was mentioned in training but wasn't something her department's officers were physically trained on. She also said she never used a Taser while on duty during her 26 years on the force, though she had pulled it out a few times, and that she never used her gun until the day she shot Wright.

Potter, who was training Officer Anthony Luckey, said Luckey noticed Wright's car in a turn lane with the signal turned on inappropriately and then saw an air freshener hanging from the rearview mirror as well as expired tags.

She said Luckey wanted to stop the vehicle, though she would "most likely" not have done so if she'd been on patrol by herself, citing the lengthy delays for Minnesota drivers to renew vehicle tags at that point of the pandemic. But she said after they found that Wright had a bench warrant for a weapons violation, they were required to arrest him because the warrant "was an order of the court."

She said they were also required to find out who Wright's female passenger was because a woman — a different one as it turned out — had taken out a restraining order against him.

While defense attorney Earl Gray walked her through what happened that day, he did not ask her whether she meant to draw her Taser. A prosecution witness testified earlier in the week that she would not have decided to use her Taser if she thought there was a danger it could cause a death or great bodily harm.

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Boeing crash victims' kin say they weren't consulted

15 families accused Justice Department of denying them chance to be heard

By Niraj Chokshi

The New York Times

More than a dozen families of people killed in two Boeing 737 Max crashes are accusing the Justice Department of illegally leaving them in the dark when it reached a settlement with the company this year.

In a court filing this week, 15 families accused the department of denying them an opportunity to weigh in on a criminal investigation into Boeing under a 2004 law meant to protect victims of crime and their representatives. They are asking a federal judge to force the department to turn over documents related to that investigation and to revoke the company's protection from further criminal prosecution on the matter.

"What happened here in the waning days of the previous administration was a complete short circuit of the congressionally mandated process for the victims to be conferred with and have an opportunity to influence the outcome," said Paul Cassell, a former federal judge who is representing the families.

The 15 families that brought the motion were joined by dozens more who signed on in support of it, representing a significant share of the 346 people killed in two Max crashes, in Indonesia in 2018 and in Ethiopia in 2019. The episodes led to a global grounding of the plane for nearly two years, a debacle that cost Boeing billions of dollars and prompted investigations around the world.

Under the Justice Department's settlement, which was announced in the final weeks of the Trump administration, Boeing agreed to pay \$2.5 billion, most of it to the airlines that suffered financial losses. Another \$500 million went to a fund for the families or representatives of the victims and about \$250 million was paid as a criminal penalty to the federal government.

Neither the Justice Department nor Boeing immediately responded to requests for comment.

Even at the time the deal was announced, many criticized it as inadequate. Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore., chair of the House Transportation Committee, said it was a "slap on

the wrist and is an insult to the 346 victims who died as a result of corporate greed."

News of the Jan. 7 agreement surprised many of the relatives of those who died, including Naoise Connolly Ryan, whose husband, Mick, died in the crash in Ethiopia in 2019, leaving behind a daughter, who is now 6, and a son, who is now 3. Connolly Ryan said she and many others learned of the settlement from the news.

"We had absolutely no idea. It's one of those moments in time that is burned in my memory," she said. "It's blood money. So I refuse to accept it. This did not reflect in any way a sense of justice, criminal justice, and what should have been accountability at the highest levels inside Boeing."

The families said the Justice Department also misled them by falsely telling them that there was no criminal investigation into Boeing. Under the 2004 Crime Victims' Rights Act, the government is required to allow victims of crime or their representatives to confer on criminal cases and to act in "fairness and with respect for the victim's dignity and privacy."

Threats to US financial system stay elevated

By Martin Crutsinger

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The nation's top financial regulators told Congress on Friday that threats to U.S. financial stability remain elevated even though the country has recovered from what appears to be the worst economic shocks from the pandemic.

In its annual report on threats to the economy, the Financial Stability Oversight Council highlighted for the first time climate change as an emerging risk, citing among other things potential loan losses from floods and forest fires.

The Biden administration has made climate change a top priority, reversing the decision by the Trump administration to pull the United States out of the Paris climate agreement.

The council is chaired by Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and the heads of other regulatory agencies including the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. and the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency.

The council was created by Congress in 2010 to address gaps in coordination among financial regulators that were exposed by the 2008 financial crisis.

Yellen, speaking before the panel approved the report Friday, said the turmoil that first enveloped financial markets in March 2020 after COVID-19 hit had been dealt with quickly by the Federal Reserve and other agencies. She said the response showed that the "financial system is far more shock resistant" than it was when the 2008 crisis struck.

The council report listed cybersecurity as another emerging threat, saying more needs to be done to protect financial institutions from malware attacks and data breaches.

BUSINESS BRIEFING

Tentative deal in Kellogg's strike

OMAHA, Neb. — Kellogg's has reached a new tentative agreement with its 1,400 striking cereal plant workers that could bring an end to the strike that began Oct. 5.

Members of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union will vote Sunday on the new offer that includes cost-of-living adjustments and a \$1.10 per hour raise for all employees, with results expected Tuesday.

Kellogg's said most workers at its cereal plants earned an average of \$120,000 last year although union members have said they work more than 80 hours a week to earn that, and those wages are only available to longtime workers. Under the two-tiered pay system the company uses, newer workers are paid less and receive fewer benefits.

\$2.6M bid wins Superman comic

NEW YORK — A rare copy of a Superman #1 comic book that sold on newsstands for a dime in 1939 was purchased for \$2.6 million in an auction.

The comic showing Superman leaping over tall buildings on the cover was sold Thursday night to a buyer who wishes to maintain a secret identity, according to ComicConnect.com, an online auction and consignment company.

The seller, Mark Michaelson, said he bought the comic in 1979 from its original owner and kept it in a temperature-controlled safe.

ComicConnect announced in April that a copy of Action Comics #1, the comic that introduced Superman in 1938, sold for \$3.25 million.



Boxes of BinaxNOW's COVID-19 self testing kits are displayed for sale last month at a CVS store in Lakewood, Wash. TED S. WARREN/AP

Buy kits first, get paid later

Paper receipts? US to unveil details on how self-test plan to work against coronavirus

By Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Biden administration's plan for health insurers to reimburse consumers for over-the-counter COVID-19 tests echoes a bygone era when companies processed large volumes of claims from individuals — with paper receipts.

It's unclear if the buy-first, get-paid-later approach will spur people to go out and get the tests, even with new urgency around the omicron variant.

"It's not likely to yield the same level of accessibility that people in other countries have," said Cynthia Cox of the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation. Cox, who tracks the U.S. health system in comparison to other advanced countries, points out that consumers in the United Kingdom can pick up free rapid tests at the pharmacy or have them delivered to their homes.

"I think we are still going to have testing problems next year," Cox said.

Omicron is not the only reason testing is taking on renewed importance. Anticipated

approval of antiviral pills that COVID-19 patients can take at home is also expected to increase demand for fast tests that can provide reliable results.

Officials have yet to provide operational details of the Biden plan, with formal guidance due Jan. 15. But the administration is confident it can overcome problems that have bedeviled U.S. testing from the start of the pandemic.

According to a White House fact sheet, health insurance companies will become the cornerstone of testing for more than 150 million people with private coverage. Insurers would reimburse for rapid tests that deliver results in as little as 15 minutes.

Coronavirus response coordinator Jeff Zients says the administration has quadrupled the supply of at-home tests, while creating a streamlined process to get new options to market. The government is scaling up free testing at pharmacies and community venues as well.

"Our goal is to give free tests to everyone who wants one in the most efficient and effective way possible," Zients said recently. "There is enough testing capacity in this country, and we're confident that as more tests come to market ... innovation will continue and prices will come down."

Estimated prices for at-home tests in the U.S. range from about \$15 to \$30, compared

with about \$1 in Germany.

Health insurance companies have been cool to the idea.

The largest trade group, America's Health Insurance Plans, has expressed concerns about price gouging for over-the-counter tests and higher premiums for consumers. The Blue Cross Blue Shield Association has called for "common-sense implementation."

There's a sense that the industry is being handed a new kind of mission.

Health insurance normally covers medically necessary services and procedures, but would COVID-19 testing for a long-desired family reunion meet that threshold? And with the automation of insurance billing, companies say they'll have to bring on new staff to handle the volume of claims for over-the-counter COVID-19 tests even if consumers upload their paper receipts.

Some public health experts are concerned the administration may be off course.

"If what we get is that everybody has to buy tests and submit paperwork for reimbursement and then get a refund, that is going to result in many people not getting tested because there are too many barriers in the way," said Dr. Leana Wen, a former Baltimore health commissioner and commentator on the pandemic.

Panel faults GSA oversight of Trump hotel

By Bernard Condon

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The federal agency overseeing the lease of the luxury hotel that Donald Trump's family company runs in the nation's capital failed to carry out its basic responsibilities because it never tracked the millions of dollars from foreign governments' patronizing the hotel or examined the origins of a \$75 million loan that helped keep its doors open, according to a congressional report.

The General Services Administration "washed its hands of responsibility" to review how much the Trump International Hotel was profiting during his presidency from foreign government payments

in possible violation of the Constitution's emoluments clause, according to the report Thursday by the Democratic-led House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. That provision bars presidents from receiving gifts or payments from foreign governments.

The committee said the GSA "ignored critical ethical and constitutional issues involving then-President Trump's financial interest in the hotel."

Neither the agency nor the Trump Organization responded to requests for comment.

In 2019, the agency's internal watchdog had criticized the GSA for failing in crucial oversight of the property.

The committee, led by Rep. Peter

DeFazio of Oregon, also said the GSA did not monitor spending at the hotel by state and local public officials that could have violated a separate constitutional provision barring domestic government payments.

The report also faulted the agency for not investigating the origins of a \$75 million loan to the hotel, a possible source of conflict between Trump's private financial interests and his public role as president. The loan, according to the report, came from the Trump family.

A report by the House Oversight and Reform Committee in October said Trump had misled the public on the hotel's finances. The committee released financial statements showing the hotel lost more than \$70 million while he was president.

Jobless claims

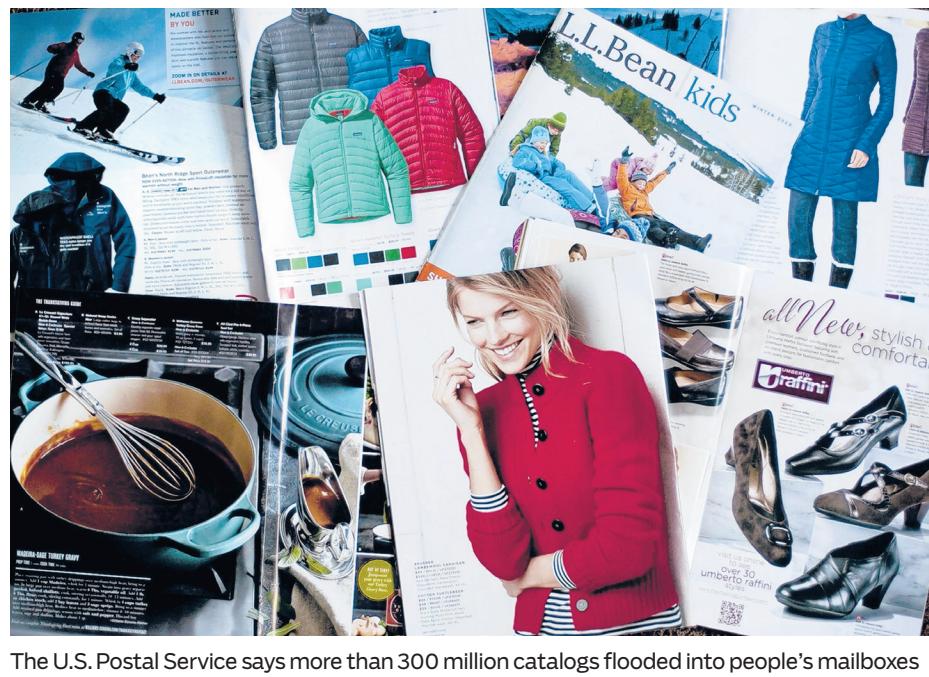
Initial unemployment claims, seasonally adjusted, in millions per week



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor

TNS

BUSINESS



The U.S. Postal Service says more than 300 million catalogs flooded into people's mailboxes in November. "The industry is not dying," says one industry expert. ROBERT F. BUKATY 2012

Catalog retailers see reason for hope in an online world

By David Sharp
Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine — A postal rate increase over the summer hasn't stopped catalog retailers from stuffing mailboxes this holiday season.

The U.S. Postal Service says more than 300 million catalogs flooded into people's mailboxes last month, and the overall number of catalogs has grown 12% over last year, officials said.

The boost continues a positive trend for catalogers that are defying those who predicted their demise in a digital world.

"The industry is not dying. There are plenty of companies that are still aggressively mailing catalogs," said Paul Miller, vice president and deputy director of the American Catalog Mailers Association.

Some online retailers like Bonobos, Amazon and Wayfair began mailing catalogs in recent years. A few that went away, like the Sharper Image and J. Peterman, have returned. Heavyweights like Lands' End, Hammacher Schlem-

mer and L.L. Bean never wavered.

Several factors are working in favor of catalog retailers.

For starters, digital advertising on e-commerce websites has grown as much as 20% to 40% this year even as privacy policy changes — Apple's efforts in particular — have made it more difficult to target ads and measure their effectiveness, said Andrew Lipsman, retail analyst at eMarketer.

Further, some find online shopping difficult to navigate — a space that is jumbled thanks to algorithms, marketing and advertising, analysts say, making it hard for people to find what they want.

Jonathan Zhang, a professor of marketing at Colorado State University, said another important factor is that catalog and store shoppers are more loyal to brands than people who shop online only.

His research found a higher return on investment from catalogs because those shoppers buy more than online-only shoppers.

New York shopper Helen Kaplow acknowledges it's

easier to thumb through catalogs and circle items of interest or dog-ear the pages, rather than scrolling through websites.

"Catalogs do seem a bit old-fashioned. They're so analog. But I think it may be their only way of getting visuals in front of you," said Kaplow, who hasn't set foot in a store in years.

Catalogs remain expensive to print and mail. The U.S. Postal Service gave a one-two punch to the industry this year with a 3% postage increase in January followed by an additional, unexpected increase of nearly 9% implemented in August.

But consumer spending remains hot and catalogs are a way for retailers to differentiate themselves, so it makes sense for retailers who can afford to distribute catalogs to do so, Lipsman said.

Catalog numbers dropped about 40% between 2006 to 2018, when an estimated 11.5 billion were mailed to homes, but they've stabilized and are showing signs of an uptick in volume, Miller said.

US new home construction bounces back 11.8% in Nov.

By Matt Ott
Associated Press

SILVER SPRING, Md. — New home construction in the U.S. rebounded 11.8% in November as strong demand continues to boost builder confidence even with the slower winter season approaching.

The double-digit percentage increase last month left home construction at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 1.68 million units, an 8.3% increase from the rate at this time last year, the Commerce Department reported this week. October's home construction number was revised downward slightly to 1.5 million units from 1.52 million units.

Applications for building permits, a barometer of future activity, rose 3.6% in November to 1.71 million units and is 0.9% above the rate in November of 2020.

Construction of both single-family homes and apartments were strong in November, with both seeing low double-digit percentage increases from October. Despite last month's increase, single-family housing starts are still down 0.8% from November of last year.

Although the big jump in November after somewhat sideways movement the past few months suggests the housing market is still strong, economists are reluctant to put too much weight in the volatile monthly housing starts data.

"It is best to just keep in mind that builders have more than enough work to keep them busy and interpret the ups and downs in the numbers as mostly noise and seasonal volatility," said Stephen Stanley, chief economist for Amherst Pierpont.

Construction activity by region saw jumps in the Northeast, 27.5%; the South, 18.4%; and the West, 5.1%. Activity in the Midwest declined 7.3%.

A monthly survey of



A worker makes repairs to a home under construction Wednesday in Newark, California. JUSTIN SULLIVAN/GETTY

builder sentiment released Wednesday by the National Association of Home Builders and Wells Fargo showed sentiment improved for the fourth consecutive month, inching up to 84 in December from 83 last month.

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A monthly survey of

months, but policy changes don't always immediately affect other loan rates. Even with three rate increases next year, its benchmark rate would still be historically low, below 1%.

In its most recent report, S&P CoreLogic Case-Shiller 20-city home price index climbed 19.1% in September from a year earlier, with prices in all 20 cities setting new records.

The Commerce Department reported last month that the median price of a new home, the point where half the homes sold for more and half for less, rose to a record \$407,700 in October, up nearly 18% from a year earlier.

The increase in home prices in the past year has decelerated a bit recently, but with supply short and rates expected to rise, it's not certain that more buyers will jump in the market.

"I don't think the Fed's announcement is going to result in a rush of buying that has a meaningful impact on prices," said Nancy Vanden Houten, lead U.S. economist at Oxford Economics. "Long-term Treasury rates, which are key in determining mortgage rates, are actually lower since the Fed's announcement."

MARKET RUNDOWN

Saturday, December 18, 2021

DOW
35,365.44 -532.20

10-YR T-BOND
1.40% -.02

GOLD
\$1,803.80 +7.20

Dow Jones industrials
Close: 35,365.44
Change: -532.20 (-1.5%)

10 DAYS

Domestic Indexes

CLOSE **CHG.** **YTD**

DOW Indus. 35,365.44 -532.20 +15.55%

DOW Trans. 15,828.97 -172.36 +26.56%

DOW Util. 950.07 -12.80 +9.88%

NYSE Comp. 16,668.64 -180.45 +14.76%

Nasdaq Comp. 15,169.68 -10.75 +17.70%

S&P 500 4,620.64 -48.03 +23.02%

S&P 400 2,728.08 -3.42 +18.27%

Wilshire 5000 47,028.32 -297.51 +19.19%

Russell 2000 2,173.93 +21.47 +10.08%

Commodities

FUELS

	CLOSE	PREV.	YTD
Crude Oil (bbl)	70.86	72.38	+46.04%
Natural Gas (mm btu)	3.69	3.77	+45.33%
Unleaded Gas (gal)	2.12	2.18	+49.02%

METALS

	CLOSE	PREV.	YTD
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Gold (oz)	1,803.80	1,796.60	-4.72%
Silver (oz)	22.51	22.46	-14.53%

(Previous and change figures reflect current contract.)

Foreign Exchange

Money Rates

ForEx in U.S. \$	U.S. \$ in ForEx	PREV.	CLOSE	WK.
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Britain 1.3251	.7547	3.25	3.25	
Canada .7765	1.2879	0.05	0.06	
China .1569	6.3754	0.13	0.13	
Euro 1.1251	.8888	1.18	1.25	
Japan .008795	113.70	10-yr T-Note	1.40	1.49
Mexico .048130	20.7771	30-yr T-Bond	1.82	1.89

Prime rate 3.25 3.25

3-mo. T-Bill 0.05 0.06

6-mo. T-Bill 0.13 0.13

5-yr T-Note 1.18 1.25

10-yr T-Note 1.40 1.49

30-yr T-Bond 1.82 1.89

(Previous and change figures reflect current contract.)

Global Markets

CLOSE	CHG.	%CHG.	%YTD
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Frankfurt 15,531.69	-104.71	-6.7%	+13.21%
London 7,269.92	+9.31	+1.3%	+12.53%
Hong Kong 23,192.63	-282.87	-1.21%	-14.83%
Nikkei 28,545.68	-520.64	-1.79%	+4.01%

(Previous and change figures reflect current contract.)

Stocks of Local Interest

STOCK (TICKER)	CLOSE	CHG.	%CHG.	YTD
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STOCK (TICKER)	CLOSE	CHG.	%CHG.	YTD
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STOCK (TICKER)	CLOSE	CHG.	%CHG.	YTD
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OPINION

COURANT.COM/OPINION

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Let's mimic Greatest Generation and save the US

Dec. 7 marked the 80th anniversary of Pearl Harbor — a day that lives in infamy. This is when the Greatest Generation stepped to the plate and saved the world from the Nazis. Now we have those who refuse to get vaccinated or wear masks tell us we are usurping their freedom just like the Nazis did to their people. How hypocritical to act in such a selfish manner. They say they believe in the right to live the way they choose, but we are nearing one million deaths from this dreaded virus. Why can't we do what my parents' generation did and stop listening to the lies? Once again, we can save this country and the world from this pandemic.

Frank Merblum, Bloomfield

Come together, like we did during WWII

According to some scientists, we won't be finished with this pandemic until the whole world is vaccinated. So let's produce enough vaccine to do just that. I know we can do it because when WWII broke out, I was there and this country turned on a dime and manufactured enough ships, planes and other war material to supply our allies, which enabled us to win that war. We did this because all Americans pulled together. That's how you do the impossible — by doing it together. One nation, indivisible.

Ruth Tyska, Glastonbury

Infrastructure Act must benefit all Americans

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act is touted as the "once-in-a-generation investment in our nation." If this is truly our moment, let us not repeat the errors of prior generations. Specifically, we must make sure investments are made in an equitable way to bolster communities that have been discriminated against historically. There are countless examples of how Black, brown, and Indigenous neighborhoods have failed to receive the resources and funding to support a healthy environment. These communities have aging sewage systems that fail to consistently remove wastewater. The fact sheet distributed by the Biden administration sounds more like a holiday wish list rather than an enacted piece of legislation. The bill is an aggressive move toward ensuring health and well-being for all Americans.

Everyone living within the United States deserves the ability to live, grow and age in a community that promotes health, regardless of what they look like. This legislation is a monumental act that can improve the quality of life for Americans across our country.

Regina Kostyun, Avon

Implement mask mandate once and for all

Gov. Ned Lamont has done a great overall job on COVID-19, especially early in the pandemic. However, his most recent approach of saying people are "going to do the right thing" is incredibly naive.

Hello! The people still wearing masks are the same people who have gotten vaccinated. The ones who have not gotten vaccinated are not going to do the right thing unless forced to. Stop with the blind eye and immediately implement a mask mandate for the next six-eight weeks and help us stop COVID-19 once and for all. The economy is going to suffer very little at this point as we all know the routine of mask wearing and social distancing. We are all going to be safer and be able to return to a more normal life a lot sooner.

Ernie Petkovich Sr., Windsor

Hold Meadows in contempt of Congress

Mark Meadows changes his mind about testifying, but wait, he had published a book. Those who refuse to testify must be held in contempt and put in prison. They cannot be silent without being penalized. If they are placed among the general population, they might change their minds.

Susan Beth Aldrich, West Hartford

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Starbucks employees and supporters react as votes are read during a viewing of their union election on Dec. 9 in Buffalo, New York. Starbucks workers at a Buffalo store voted to unionize this month, a first for the 50-year-old coffee retailer in the U.S. JOSHUA BESSEX/AP

OP-ED

Why a union victory at a single Starbucks bodes well for labor

By Steven Greenhouse

Last week's union victory at a single Starbucks in Buffalo, New York, may seem small, but it has huge symbolic importance. It is the only one of Starbucks' more than 8,900 company-owned cafes in the United States to unionize, but it probably won't be the last.

Nelson Lichtenstein, a labor historian at the University of California, Santa Barbara, predicts that emboldened baristas at many more Starbucks across the U.S. — including perhaps in union-friendly cities like Los Angeles and San Francisco — could be inspired to rush to petition for union elections. The tiny acorn of a union victory in Buffalo could soon become a fast-growing oak in which workers across America's service sector move toward union membership. And this, some labor experts say, could help reverse organized labor's decline to just 1 in 10 U.S. workers.

The conditions for a labor resurgence are better than they've been in decades, but it still won't be easy. Joe Biden is the most pro-union president since Franklin Roosevelt and often goes out of his way to boost unions, most recently condemning Kellogg's use of permanent replacement workers to defeat a two-month-long strike. According to a recent Gallup poll, 68% of Americans approve of unions — the highest level in more than 50 years — and 77% of Americans aged 18 to 34 approve of unions. That, of course, is the age group of Starbucks workers.

Many young Americans, plagued by student debt and high rents, are frustrated with the inequitable economic system and are eager for change, and unionization is a way to bring about real change. It gives workers a stronger voice, a seat at the table, as well as collective

power, to demand improvements in their pay and their working conditions.

The union victory in Buffalo came despite Starbucks' fierce anti-union efforts, showing how far some corporations will go to keep out unions. After workers at three Starbucks stores in Buffalo petitioned to unionize with Workers United, a division of the Service Employees International Union, Starbucks dispatched executives and managers from around the country to work in those three cafes, including the president of Starbucks' North American retail operations. Starbucks said it sent the managers so they could listen to workers about their problems, but several pro-union workers said the heavy managerial presence was a way to intimidate them and spy on them. Union supporters also complained that Starbucks transferred new baristas into one store at the last minute to dilute support for the union when the workers voted.

Although one store voted 19-8 in favor of unionizing, workers at a second store voted 12-8 against unionizing. At the third store, the union was ahead, 15-9, but the vote was inconclusive because there were many still-to-be-counted challenged ballots.

If Starbucks workers seek to unionize at 50 or 100 stores in, say, 20 cities — including perhaps New York, Boston, Detroit, Minneapolis and Seattle, in addition to L.A. and San Francisco — the company would have a harder time mounting as intense an anti-union effort as it did in Buffalo, which would increase the workers' chances of winning.

A few more union victories at Starbucks could inspire other service-sector workers to seek to unionize — perhaps at McDonald's, Taco Bell, Applebee's,

Home Depot or Dollar General. Many workers who are unhappy with their pay and working conditions have not considered unionizing because they are afraid to stick their necks out and see little chance of a union drive succeeding. But the union victory in Buffalo could help overcome that hesitancy.

Of course, winning unionization elections against anti-union companies like Starbucks and Amazon is never easy. American law gives employers a huge advantage, permitting them to propagandize against a union 24/7 in the workplace. At the same time, companies can ban union organizers from setting foot on company property, as the Supreme Court ruled in June in a case involving California farmworkers. Moreover, U.S. law all but encourages anti-union employers to break the law when fighting unions because labor law doesn't allow for any fines for such violations, no matter how egregious, including firing the workers leading the unionization effort.

Even with a successful union vote, Starbucks can still undermine the workers by dragging out contract negotiations for a year or two or three. The law doesn't require employers to ever reach a first contract, though it does prohibit them from bargaining in "bad faith," something that's often hard to prove legally.

Still, the news from Buffalo creates a hopeful moment. Whenever a union wins at a highly visible, anti-union company, that opens up possibilities. The question now is whether many more workers will seize on this possibility as the best way to improve their workplaces.

Steven Greenhouse is the author of "Beat Down, Worked Up: The Past, Present, and Future of American Labor."

OP-ED

Biden, push the voting bills now

By E.J. Dionne Jr.

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — It's time to make it all about democracy.

It's time for President Joe Biden to embrace what he put front-and-center when announcing his candidacy in April 2019: that "the threat to this nation was unlike any I had ever seen in my lifetime."

Biden hoped then that by defeating Donald Trump, it would be enough to end the danger.

It hasn't.

It's not just that the 2020 election was closer than Biden had hoped. The results also helped Republicans win enough seats in the House and Senate to turn the enactment of Biden's agenda into a nightmarish procedural minefield.

Worse, Trump refused to accept defeat, and his campaign against democracy has continued full force. A substantial majority of those who call themselves Republicans still believe that the 2020 election was stolen. The widespread acceptance of this lie has bred a shameful timidity among Republican politicians who know better. Those who speak out forcefully for democracy and the rule of law — see Reps. Liz Cheney, R-Wyo., and Adam Kinzinger, R-Ill. — are ostracized.

Trump's mendacity has created the rationale for democracy-wrecking measures in state after state while emboldening a movement to intimidate nonpartisan election officials into resigning so they can be replaced by those who embrace his falsehoods.

Democrats, by contrast, seem to be moving in many different directions at once. Some focus primarily on enacting as much of Biden's Build Back Better agenda as they can. Others want to

emphasize the imperative of protecting democracy by passing the Freedom to Vote Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.

In the meantime, the House select committee on the Jan. 6 attack, led by Rep. Bennie G. Thompson, D-Miss., and Cheny, has — to its credit — spent the last few days offering an abundance of evidence reminding the country that Trump and his supporters in Congress were trying to stage a coup. They really and truly were trying to void the results of a free election. The violence on Capitol Hill was part of this effort.

Here's the problem: There is, currently, no through line, no overarching rationale, for these disparate Democratic endeavors. The investigation of Trump and the campaign for voting rights seem disconnected from Biden's social initiatives. As for the latter, deadlines keep slipping, their purpose lost in a miasma of competing (big) numbers and uncertainties about which parts of a House-passed bill the Senate might endorse.

Yes, everything would be easier if Sens. Joe Manchin III, D-W.Va., and Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz., were willing to move quickly to make a deal. The sooner that happens, the better.

But angry public scoldings have not had much effect on the two holdouts, and Biden's private entreaties to Manchin last week seem to have done little to break the impasse. When Biden was asked on Wednesday how much progress he was making on his program before he left for Kentucky to comfort survivors of deadly tornadoes, the president replied with one less-than-full-hearted word: "Some."

What's missing in Washington is a sense of urgency. The best case for that urgency rests on the imperative to defend

democracy. Biden must stop downplaying the pro-democracy bills while waiting for passage of his social program. The truth is: We've waited too long for both.

And at the moment, there appears to be more room for hope on the voting legislation. A group of senators who have in the past shared Manchin's reluctance to change the filibuster rules have been working closely with him to find a way to alter them enough to get the democracy bills — bills that both he and Sinema support — to Biden's desk.

A victory for the voting reforms would electrify Biden's currently dispirited supporters. And a bold defense of democracy is exactly the right response both to the findings of the Jan. 6 committee so far and to the attacks on free elections in the states.

Building on voting rights victories, Biden would be in a stronger position to argue that passing the rest of his program is part of an effort "to prove that democracy still works," as he put it last April, by easing the day-to-day burdens on our citizens. Surely Manchin and Sinema cannot want Biden's efforts to collapse in a heap. That would only open a wide path for a resurgence of Trumpist Republicanism, the main threat to our democracy now.

"Democracies don't die all at once," Sen. Raphael G. Warnock, D-Ga., told MSNBC's Rachel Maddow on Tuesday night. "It's a little bit at a time."

Precisely because the dangers to democracy often don't become obvious to everyone until it's too late, Biden needs to make raising the alarm his priority. "We are in a battle for the soul of this nation," he said in 2019. We still are.

E.J. Dionne writes about politics for The Washington Post.

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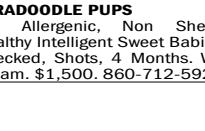
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Jewelry, Mens & Womens, License Plates, Jewelry,
Name & Framed Items, Zipper, I
check Bsmth/Attic. 860-817-4350

Announcements

Lost/Found

IMPOUND - #137 Shih Tzu, Female,
Tan & White. Call Hartford PD at
860-757-4000.

Business

Business Opportunities

CARPET CLEANING VAN 2002 Ford
E250. Truck mounted equipment,
70 gallon solution tank. Retiring.
\$12,000. 860-916-9252

Real Estate

Rentals

HARTFORD Recently Remodeled
2BR, Cldo, Ov. Farmington Ave
Near Aetna. At Bus Stop. Great Safe
Neighborhood. High Ceilings, Wood
Floors, Heat, Hot Water, Inclued
Rooftop, Patio, Laundry & Storage.
No Pets Or Smoking. \$975. Call
860-678-8170

Auto & SUV's

VOLKSWAGEN JETTA SPORTWAGEN
2010 - \$6,700. Car has a
mechanical issue 8609181549

Antiques/ Classics

LINCOLN CONTINENTAL 1983
\$5500 Great condition and clean.
49,000 original miles. Blue/green
color. Best offer considered.
8609166343

Trucks & Vans



DODGE RAM 1500 2002 - \$9700
This truck had a full front-to-
back complete service by Stilly's
Automotive in Lisbon. 8609181549

Car Reviews

Saturdays in MOTORING

TAG SALES**Tag Sales & Flea Markets****MANCHESTER** - Estate Sale.

61 Bruce Rd. Fri 12/17 & Sat 12/18,
8am-3pm. Entire contents of farm
house. Decor, kit, jewelry, bookshelf,
albums, punching bag, weight
equip., garage, tools, Xmas décor.

TORRINGTON - Estate Sale. A big
entire contents sale at 20 Barton
St. Torrington. Sat, Sun & Mon Dec
18, 19 & 20, 8am-4pm. Furniture,
smalls, collectibles, vintage items,
antiques, HH, tools plus much more!
So come ready to wheel & deal!
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in East Granby. For more information
860-653-2551

www.courant.com/pets

Auto / Truck Wanted

CASH PAID - for any Toyota, other
makes. Any condition. Running or
not crashed okay. Will take other
makes and models. 203-600-4431

Steve Dale's
PET WORLD

Sundays in Smarter Living

Car Reviews

Saturdays in
MOTORING

Steve Dale's
PET WORLD

Sundays in Smarter Living

Car Reviews

Saturdays in
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Steve Dale's
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PUBLIC NOTICES**Connecticut****INVITATION TO BID**
TECHNOLOGY EQUIPMENT
for MANFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
STATE PROJECT NO. 078-0068N, PHASE
3 of 3

The Town of Mansfield is seeking competitive
bids for the delivery and installation of
technology equipment for the Mansfield
Elementary School, 134 Warrenville Road,
Mansfield, CT. Categories of technology
equipment include Telcom and MDF
Multiplex, Data Network, Equipment,
Wireless, Access Points, Printers, and Audio
Visual Information Technology.

Bid documents including drawings and
specifications will be available on or after
December 15, 2021. Due to the current
public health crisis, bidders must submit their
bid through e-bidding as follows:

Through an online, secure E-Procurement
Portal. Bids can be submitted at the following
link: <https://mansfieldct.bonfirehub.com/portal/tab=login>

Regarding bid submission method used
by bidders, bids and supporting documents
must be received by the Town of Mansfield by
January 19, 2022 at 2:00pm. Bids received
after that time will not be considered. Bids
will be publicly opened and read aloud in the
Council Chambers. Members of the public
who will be attending the bid opening will
be required to maintain safe social distance
and wear face masks. Arrangements will
be made for public attendance using Zoom
Video Conference. The Town of Mansfield
will not be responsible for late bid delivery
through certified mail or courier, or for technical
difficulties in uploading bids online.

The Instructions to Bidders, Bid Form, and
other contract documents may be examined and
downloaded from the "Your Government"
-RFQ, RFP and Bid Postings" section the
Town of Mansfield website mansfieldct.bonfirehub.com/.

Printed versions of the documents can be
purchased for a fee and set directly from
the Repostore, 37 Airport Road, Hartford,
CT 06114. Repostore customer service
can be reached by telephone at 209-0374 or via
email at plots@repostore.com. Purchases are non-refundable. Bidders
can also access the bid documents electronically,
including the drawings and specifications, for
\$30.00 through the Repostore digital plan
room on the website by visiting the following
link: <https://www.repostoreplanroom.com/>

Questions concerning bidding procedure
should be addressed to the Owner's Project
Manager at Colliers Project Leaders:
Scott Pelleman, AIA, Senior Project Manager
scott.pelleman@colliers.com.

Requests for additional information or clarifi-
cation should be sent to the email above.
Official responses to questions will be issued
by email. Addendum, if any, will be issued by
email to all bidders. If any addendum is issued,
please advise the Project Manager by email
so that you can be notified of any addendum
that is issued.

The Town of Mansfield hereby notifies all
bidders that it will affirmatively ensure that
in any contract entered into pursuant to this
advertisement, disadvantaged business
enterprises will be afforded full opportunity
to submit bids in response to this invitation,
and they will not be discriminated against
on the grounds of race, color, national
origin or sex, in consideration for an award.

An Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity
Employer. Minority/Women's Business
Enterprises are encouraged to bid.

The Town of Mansfield reserves the right to
accept or reject any or all bids; to waive any
informality; or to accept any bid deemed in
the best interest of the Town of Mansfield.

All bids will be

OBITUARIES BY TOWN

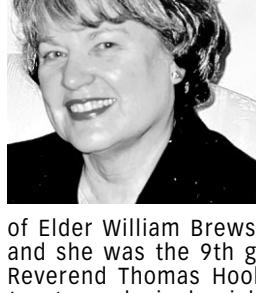
Avon	Newington
Richard E. Parker	Rose M. Cersosimo
Bristol	Mary L. Cocollo
Robert E. Poland	Rose Y. Sadoian
Burlington	Old Saybrook
Michael Veneziano, III	Janet H. Clark
Hartford	Other Towns in CT
John J. Lappen	Michael Veneziano, III
Jerzy Marczak	Simsbury
Miriam Weisman	Richard E. Parker
Manchester	Tolland
Dzidra Dzenis	Anthony R. Lapointe
John J. Lappen	Vernon
Elinor D. Tierney	Dzidra Dzenis
Sean A. Williamson	West Hartford
Middletown	Janet H. Clark
Linda Klemba	Mary L. Cocollo
New Britain	Miriam Weisman
Joseph F. Henri	Wethersfield
Stanislawka Prochnicka	Jerzy Marczak
	Douglas A. Wilcox

* Denotes name listing only.

Please note: not all death notices are in alphabetical order.

OBITUARIES

Clark, Janet Hooker (Butler)



Janet Hooker Butler Clark, beloved wife of the late David Taylor Clark, succumbed to Alzheimer's and died peacefully, at the age of 86 on September 27, 2021. Born on September 15, 1935 in Hartford, CT, Janet was the daughter of the late George Morris Butler and the late Pauline Harper Butler. Janet was a direct descendant of Elder William Brewster, Minister on the Mayflower, and she was the 9th generation direct descendant of Reverend Thomas Hooker, who founded Hartford, CT. Janet was lovingly nicknamed 'Hooky' by many of her cousins.

Janet had an unusual childhood, which served to reinforce the importance of family and home for her. Janet was orphaned at the age of 13. She went with her Collie Bonnie to live with family friends in New Haven for a year, attending Prospect Country Day (now Hopkins School). Then at age 14 she moved to New Orleans, LA, living for 2 years with her eldest sister Carolyn and her family, attending Country Day. Subsequently at age 16 she moved to live for two years with her other sister Marguerite and family in Los Gatos, CA, finishing High School at Los Gatos High School, before moving again to Maine to attend Colby College where she met her future husband David. Janet enjoyed being a member of Alpha Delta Pi Sorority, majored in Psychology and graduated in 1957, marrying Dave later that summer. After a year in Providence, RI, the Clarks lived in West Hartford for 46 years before living sequentially in Farmington, Avon, and finally Bloomfield (at Duncaster). When the Clark's 2 children became teenagers, Janet really enjoyed and was proud of working for Hartford Easter Seal Rehabilitation, and later as Director of Admissions at UCONN/John Dempsey Hospital & Health Center in Farmington.

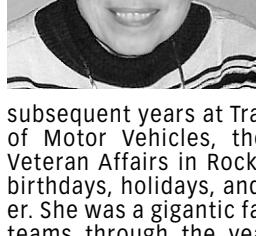
Janet always put the needs of others first. Among her volunteer work was the American School for the Deaf, and Habitat for Humanity. She was a member of the The Mayflower Society, The Town & County Club, The Junior League of Hartford, Society of the Descendants of the Founders of Hartford, Universalist Unitarian Church of West Hartford, Avon Golf Club (briefly), and Daughters of the American Revolution. Janet will always be remembered for her wide spectrum of interests: love of art, environmental concerns, gardening, music, psychology, theater, and travel. Janet and David were fortunate to travel extensively throughout the world for many years, always coming back to their cottage and childhood friends at Old Kelsey Point in Westbrook. Janet's husband David passed away 4 months earlier in May. She is survived by her daughter Lauren A. Hutton and son-in-law Peter M. Hutton of Ipswich, MA, two granddaughters Julia A. Hutton of New York City, and Samantha Clark Gammie with her husband Judd Gammie, and the Clark's Great granddaughter Penelope Gammie. Her son Bruce L. Clark passed away in 2019. Numerous nieces and nephews live around the country. Both of Janet's older sisters Carolyn Krentz & Marguerite Rood predeceased Janet.

A double funeral for Janet & David is planned for the Spring 2022.

Donations can be made to the Alzheimer's Association, P.O. Box 96011, Washington, DC 20090, 800.272.3900, on line at <https://www.alz.org>

Please sign guestbook at courant.com/obituaries

Cersosimo, Rose M. (Gervasio)



Rose Cersosimo, of Newington, passed away peacefully on Tuesday, December 14, 2021. Born and raised in Hartford, she graduated from Bulkeley High School in 1948. She was predeceased by her parents, Joseph and Carmella Gervasio; and by her husband Carmon A. Cersosimo. Rose worked as a clerk/typist for subsequent years at Traveler's Insurance Co., the Dept. of Motor Vehicles, then retiring from the Dept. of Veteran Affairs in Rocky Hill. She enjoyed her family's birthdays, holidays, and vacations to Cape Cod together. She was a gigantic fan of the UConn Girls' Basketball teams through the years. A member of the Robbins Welles Library Friends group, she looked forward every year to the Adult Reading Group. Rose was also an active member of the Women's Auxiliary of the Polish-American Club (Newington) for many years. Survivors include: her brother, Victor Gervasio, and his wife, Patty, of Southington; her son, Robert J. Cersosimo (PharmD) and his wife, Susan of North Attleboro, MA; her grandson, Joseph and his wife, Danielle; her grandson, Michael, and his wife, Stephanie; and her granddaughter, Laura (Ph.D) and her husband, Ryan Noyes, all of MA. The bright light of her life was her 3 year old great-granddaughter, Liliana Rose. She is also survived by many cousins in Rocky Hill, Wethersfield and Durham. Relatives and friends are invited to call on Monday, December 20th, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Duksa Family Funeral Homes at Newington Memorial, 20 Bonair Ave., Newington. Her funeral services will begin on Tuesday, December 21st, at 9:00 a.m. at Newington Memorial followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at 10:00 a.m. at the Church of the Holy Spirit, 183 Church St., Newington. Interment will be in Rose Hill Memorial Park, Rocky Hill. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Annunciation Parish, 626 Willard Ave., Newington, CT 06111 or to the Lucy Robbins Welles Library, 100 Garfield St., Newington, CT 06111. To share a memory with her family, please visit us at www.duksa.net.

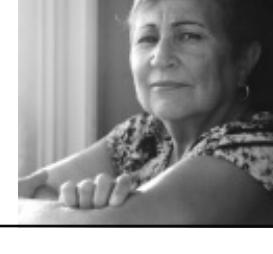
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OBITUARIES

Dzenis, Dzidra "Dee" (Emars)



Dzidra "Dee" (Emars) Dzenis, 93, of Vernon, beloved wife of the late Osvalds Dzenis died peacefully on Sunday, December 12, 2021, at Vernon Manor. She was born in Latvia on April 7, 1928, daughter to the late Girts and Hermine (Reboks) Emars. She was raised on a farmstead in rural Latvia. As a young adult she and her family had to make the difficult decision to leave their homeland, so they fled war torn Europe and immigrated to the U.S. in 1950. She and her family originally settled in Willimantic CT where she met the love of her life, Osvalds "Ozzie" Dzenis. They were married in 1953. Together they built their dream home in Manchester CT, moving there in 1957. There she raised her family and adopted many dogs throughout the years. She was a member of the Latvian Lutheran Church. An avid lover of the arts, Dzidra enjoyed collecting paintings and ceramics. She was always reading, writing poetry, and filling her home with music and fresh cut wildflowers. A lifelong lover of animals, she contributed to countless animal and wildlife rescue causes. She loved cooking and baking and was always trying new recipes. Her specialty was her buttercream tortes made for special occasions throughout the year. A kind, generous, caring, loving, and devoted mother, grandmother, and friend she will be dearly missed. She leaves her daughter, Ingrid Hart and her husband Brian of Vernon; her son, Martin Dzenis and his husband Peter Dart of Coventry; her step grandchildren, Jason Hart, his wife Tiffany and their family of ME, and Brian Hart Jr., his wife Katie and their family of CT. She was predeceased by her brother, Ojars Emars, and her nephew, Andrejs Emars. Her family wishes to thank the nurses and staff at Vernon Manor for their kind and compassionate care. Funeral services and burial will be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers memorial donations may be made to a charity of the donor's choice that champions for the welfare or rescue of animals. Samsel & Carmon Funeral Home in South Windsor has care of the arrangements. For online condolences please visit www.carmonfuneralhome.com

Please sign guestbook at courant.com/obituaries

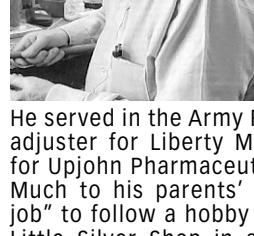
Henri, Joseph Felix



Joseph Felix Henri, 79, of New Britain passed away on November 18, 2021 after a brief illness. Born in Biddeford, ME to the late Albert and Bernadette Henri, Joseph moved to New Britain and worked for the Housing Authority for a number of years. Joseph proudly served in the US Coast Guard for four years and then the Coast Guard Reserves for over a decade. Beloved husband to Gail (Hackney) Henri of 59 years Gail and Joseph married in 1962 at St. Mary's Church in New Britain, CT. Joseph loved motorcycles and street rods. He was a renaissance man, jack of all trades and he was great at everything he did! He also published a book of poems. In addition to his wife, Gail, Joseph is survived by and will be dearly missed by: two daughters Cynthia Israel and Michelle Henri, 6 grandchildren, and 12 great grandchildren. All services for Joseph Henri will be private. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Joseph's name to a charity of your choice. New Britain Memorial & Donald D. Sagarino Funeral Home, 444 Farmington Avenue, New Britain has been entrusted with arrangements. For an online memorial, please visit www.NewBritainSagarino.com.

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Parker, Richard E.



Richard E. Parker "Dick", husband of "Jeannie" Thompson Parker and owner of the Little Silver Shop, died on December 13, 2021, from complications of heart disease at the age of 84. He was the son of Edgar and Valma Webber Parker born July 5, 1937, in Hartford, CT. He grew up in Plainville, CT and graduated from Vermont Academy and Tufts University.

He served in the Army Reserves and worked as a claims adjuster for Liberty Mutual and detail drug salesman for Upjohn Pharmaceutical covering most of VT. Much to his parents' dismay, he left a "good paying job" to follow a hobby he loved. Soon Dick opened the Little Silver Shop in a former one-car garage in Old Avon Village and became the smallest anchor tenant of any shopping mall. He liked being his own boss and was happy creating gold and silver jewelry for his loyal customers the past 60 years. His button bracelets became a tradition in many families in the Farmington Valley and across the country and were sometimes spotted on the wrists of tourists and residents around the world. If you wore one, you immediately knew where it came from. Old curmudgeon that he was, he did get a kick out of being referred to as "the Mayor of Old Avon Village" with his own designated parking space as he was the oldest business in that location. Dick spent his free time boating, playing duplicate bridge, using his private pilot's license and putting miles on his lawn tractor. He often recalled great memories of his youth at Leete's Island in Guilford, CT. In later years he again enjoyed Leete's Island and Lake Bomoseen, VT.

Richard is survived by his wife of 55 years, Jeannie, his sons, Thomas, Robert and his fiancée Jessie, her children, Julie and Douglas, his brother-in-law, Douglas Thompson and cousins JoAn, Nancy, Scott, Sally, Gwen, Denny and Marabeth.

Companions and Homemakers and the staff at Avon Health Center and McLean Hospice provided exceptional care. We appreciate the dedication of assistant silversmith, Chris Mathein and salesperson, Ingrid Glasson who held down the fort at the store through the pandemic. A shout out is due Richard's other assistant craftsmen through the years, son Tom Parker, Douglas Thompson, Tom Dexter plus long-time employees Gretchen, Elin, Ann, Rita, Valerie, Jessica, Alison and a host of full-time and part-time sales girls. The unwavering support of the Gondek angels, Brian C. and Harry W. brought him good cheer.

Dick's family will receive friends Monday, December 20, 2021, from 5-6 PM followed by a Memorial Service at 6 PM at the Carmon Funeral Home & Family Center, 301 Country Club Rd., Avon, CT. A reception will follow the service at Carmon's. Please wear masks during all the services. Memorial donations may be made to the the West Avon Cemetery Association, 712 West Avon Road, Avon, CT 06001 or to the American Heart Association, 5 Brookside Drive, Wallingford, CT 06492. For directions or condolences please visit www.carmonfuneralhome.com

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Marczak, Jerzy



Jerzy Marczak, 88, of Hartford, beloved husband of Zofia Marczak (Stajniak), passed away peacefully December 14, 2021 surrounded by his loving family. Jerzy was born on 1/15/1933 in Perna, woj, Lodzkie, Poland, and was the son of the late Adam Marczak and Stanislawa Wojtczak.

Jerzy worked in Poland at Predom Mesko, Zaklady Metalowe in Skarzysko-Kamienna for over 30 years. He served in the Polish Air Force from 1953-1956 in Balice-Krakow. He and his family immigrated to the USA in 1981, settling in Hartford. Jerzy immediately started working for Capewell Horsenails Company in Hartford and Bloomfield where he repaired, improved, maintained machines, and trained a lot of workers until his retirement in 2005. Jerzy was a longtime devoted member and dedicated altar server of SS. Cyril and Methodius Parish in Hartford.

Jerzy and Zofia loved to travel, they especially enjoyed their religious pilgrimages to places like the Vatican, Fatima and Israel. He will always be remembered for being an innovator and handyman. His family will cherish his amazing creations forever. His love for mushroom picking, Polish food, and Polish music made him and everyone around him connected. Most of all, Jerzy was a devoted family man, he truly enjoyed spending time with his family and friends.

Along with Zofia, his wife of 66 years, Jerzy leaves his daughters Jolanta Koza of Wethersfield, Magdalena Oziomek and her husband Henryk of Newington, and Anna Kaczkowski and her husband Richard of North Granby. He also leaves his cherished grandchildren, Michelle Koza-Koc and her husband Dorian of Plainville, Christopher Koza and his wife Kayla of Willington, Thomas Oziomek and fiancée Aimee of Pennsylvania, Michael Oziomek and his wife Hilary of Burlington, Robert Oziomek and his fiancée Karolina of Middletown, and Nicole and Kasia Kaczkowski of North Granby. He will especially be missed by his great-grandchildren, Niko and Caleb.

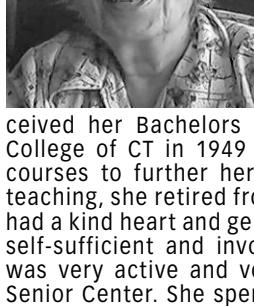
Jerzy leaves behind his godson Walter Kowalewski and his wife Barbara of New Britain with family, and many relatives and long-time friends in U.S.A. and Poland. In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by his brother John Marczak, sister Janina Marczak-Kowalewski, son-in-law Mark Koza and his first daughter Marysia.

The family will receive relatives and friends on Monday, December 20, 2021 from 4 to 7 p.m. at the D'Esopo Funeral Chapel, 277 Folly Brook Boulevard, Wethersfield. Masks are required. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, December 21, 2021 at SS. Cyril and Methodius Parish, 63 Popieluszko Court, Hartford, CT. Everyone is asked to meet directly at church. Burial will follow at Sacred Heart Cemetery, New Britain. In lieu of flowers, please make memorial donations to SS. Cyril and Methodius Church. For online expressions of sympathy to the family, please visit www.desopofuneralchapel.com.

D'Esopo
Funeral Chapel

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Sadoian, Rose Y. (Yousoof)



Rose Y. (Yousoof) Sadoian, 95, of Newington, passed away peacefully on Thursday, December 16, 2021, surrounded by her family. She was the beloved wife of the late Martin Sadoian. Born in Brooklyn, NY, daughter of the late Barsom and Baizar (Bargamian) Yousoof, she was raised in Stamford before settling in Newington in 1956. Rose received her Bachelor's of Science from the Teacher's College of CT in 1949 and continued taking graduate courses to further her career. After a long career in teaching, she retired from the New Britain School. Rose had a kind heart and gentle disposition. She was always self-sufficient and involved with her community. She was very active and volunteered with the Newington Senior Center. She spent the last four and a half years residing at Middlewoods where she loved the staff and residents. Rose described Middlewoods as having a "cruise ship" feel and she won Resident of the Year. She was also an active member of the First Bible Baptist Church in Plainville. A loving mother and grandmother, she leaves her daughter Janis Belmonte and her husband Louis of Windham, NH, her son Gary Sadoian and his wife Ann of New Britain, and her three grandsons, Nathaniel, Ethan and Seth Sadoian. She was predeceased by her brother Dr. Harry Yousoof. Funeral services will be private with Duksa Family Funeral Homes at Newington Memorial, 20 Bonair Ave., Newington. Memorial donations may be made to the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital at www.stjude.org. To share a memory with her family, please visit us at www.duksa.net.

DUKSA

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OBITUARIES

Cocolla, Mary L. Lombardo

Mary L. (Lombardo) Cocolla passed away peacefully on December 15, 2021 at age 97. She was born June 20, 1924 in Hartford, CT and at age 9 moved to Italy with her parents, Vincenzo & Santa Lombardo, where she would meet her husband Salvatore Cocolla.

In October 1946 they were wed and she returned with her husband to the United States in 1947. They lived the majority of their lives in West Hartford, where they raised two children and later two grandchildren. Mary worked for CT Spring Corp until her retirement and supported her husband in his business, the Professional Barber Shop, until his retirement at age 83. She spent her golden years traveling with her husband and enjoying the company of her children, grandchildren, and family.

She was a pillar of support to everyone in her life, always ready with a hug, a meal, or a secretly stashed twenty dollar bill from her purse. "Shh, don't tell your grandfather." Don't worry, we never did. She always hosted every holiday and showed her love through the delicious dishes she shared with her family. She will forever be missed.

Mary was predeceased by her husband Salvatore and daughter Virginia Hawkins Cocolla. She leaves behind her son Peter Cocolla and daughter-in-law Mary P. Cocolla; her grandchildren Mychal Cocolla and his wife Krystal and Daniel Cocolla and fiancée; her great-grandchildren Giuliana and Nicolas Cocolla; her sister Anna Amato and brother-in-law Gaetano Amato; her nephews Joseph and Anthony Amato and family; and her cousins, nieces, and nephews on the Cocolla side.

Calling hours will be at the Sheehan-Hilborn-Breen Funeral Home, 1084 New Britain Ave, West Hartford on Sunday, December 19 between 2:00-4:00 pm with Words of Remembrance beginning at 4:00 pm. Family and guests may gather at Sheehan-Hilborn-Breen Funeral Home on Monday, December 20 at 9:30 am for the 10:00 am Funeral Home Service. Burial will follow in Fairview Cemetery, 200 Whitman Avenue, West Hartford.

For online condolences and link to virtual services, please visit www.SheehanHilbornBreen.com

Sheehan Hilborn Breen
FUNERAL HOME

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Klemba, Linda (Spencer)

Linda Klemba of Middletown, passed away peacefully on Wednesday December 15, 2021 surrounded by her family. She was born in Hartford Hospital, first of four children to the late Beverly and Robert G. Spencer of Rocky Hill. She was preceded in death by her brother Robert G. Spencer, Jr. Linda is survived by her beloved husband, Joseph Klemba; children, Matt, Eric, Chaz, Brandy, Zackary; grandchildren, Gabriel, Zachary, Zane, Zoe and Cole; sisters, Lorraine Worley and Susan McMullen; sisters-in-law Elaine and Linda; and many nieces and nephews. Linda was a beloved member of South Congregational Church in Middletown. She loved her gardens and Cape Cod. She also enjoyed card making, scrapbooking, sewing and traveling. Most of all Linda loved her family and friends. She will be missed by all she touched with her creativity, her compassion and loving spirit. Find her spirit in nature, at the sight of a cardinal and in the love and laughter of daily life. Funeral Services will be held on Monday (Dec. 20th) at 12 p.m. at South Congregational Church, Pleasant St., Middletown. Friends and family may call at Biega Funeral Home, 3 Silver St. Middletown, on Monday from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Burial will be at the convenience of the family. In lieu of flowers, those who wish may send memorial contributions to Fisher House Boston, P.O. Box 230, South Walpole, MA 02021 or at www.fisherhouseboston.org. To share memories or express condolences online please visit www.biegafuneralhome.com.

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Weisman, Miriam (Kroopnick)

On Wednesday, December 15, 2021, Miriam Weisman passed away peacefully at the age of 98. Miriam was born in 1923 in Hartford, the second of three children, to Abe and Clara Kroopnick, both refugees from Eastern Europe. She enjoyed joking about being "the middle child". She remembered giving up her bed at a moment's notice whenever their family took in relatives and acquaintances who unexpectedly stayed and enjoyed a hearty meal. Her 'progressive' dad proudly taught her to drive the family car when she was 16; she even drove her father's fruit and vegetable truck at times when he was ill. Miriam graduated Weaver High School in 1941, an accomplished violinist in the school and inter-high orchestras. She always noted that her eventual husband, Bill Weisman, was a much better violinist, holding 1st chair. She also taught "Sunday School" at the Agudas Achim Synagogue in Hartford while in high school. Her college career at 'Teacher's College' in New Britain was cut short by the premature death of her mother, as she remained home to take care of her father and her 13 year old brother. In 1947 she married Bill Weisman, her 7th grade orchestra mate. Miriam worked part time in a variety of secretarial and book-keeping positions as she and Bill raised a family. After Bill's death in 1970, she worked full time as an accounts receivable clerk for several Hartford businesses. Following retirement, she moved to a custom in-law suite at her daughter's home in Needham, MA. Her 'new pad', as she named it, allowed her independence and the ability to enjoy her grandchildren, share her culinary delights, and make new friends. Miriam was preceded in death by her husband Bill, and her older sister Bea. She leaves her brother Seymour Kroopnick and his wife Ina Bendett of Avon, her son Mark Weisman and wife Angela LaBella of Bloomfield, her daughter Cheryl Weisman-Cohen and husband Michael J. Cohen of Irvine, CA and Needham, MA, and her loving grandchildren Whitney and Benjamin. Her warmth and wisdom will be greatly missed. The family thanks the caring people at Riverbend of South Natick, and at West Hartford Health & Rehabilitation. A funeral service will be held at Carmon Funeral Home, 301 Country Club Road, Avon, CT at 1:30pm, Sunday, December 19, 2021, followed by a graveside service in Hartford. All fully vaccinated friends and family are welcome to attend. Donations may be made to the 4-H Education Center at Auerfarm, Bloomfield, www.auerfarm.org, or to the American Heart Association. To leave condolences online please visit www.carmon-funeralhome.com

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Visit the obituary section on courant.com to share memories of loved ones.



March 19, 1933 – December 10, 2021 John "Jack" Lappen, 88, of Manchester, CT and beloved husband of Barbara (Shenning) Lappen, died peacefully on December 10, 2021. He was born on March 19, 1933, in Jamaica, New York and was a lifelong resident of Manchester, Connecticut. He was the son of the late Howard E. Lappen and Estelle V. Lappen. Jack proudly enlisted in the United States Marine Corp during the Korean Conflict, serving on seventeen different military ships. He was honorably discharged with a rank of Staff Sergeant. He graduated from Central Connecticut State College with a degree in Business. He worked in Insurance Sales and as a salesman for Nutmeg Building Supply for many years before starting a career in Real Estate, both selling Real Estate at his own agency as well as later becoming a mortgage originator.

He was an amazing dad who cherished his family and fatherly role. He enjoyed traveling throughout Europe and the Caribbean as well as the National Parks in the US with his lovely wife Barbara. He coached Manchester Little League Baseball and Bowling at Vernon Lanes for many years. He was an avid tennis and billiard player. Jack also loved playing bridge with his friends at the Senior Center. In his younger years, he enjoyed water skiing, bowling, golfing, horseshoes, boating and fishing. He was the family grill master who loved gardening and writing poetry. He had strong opinions and loved to share them on a wide spectrum of topics, often in Letters to the Editor in various publications.

Jack was married to the love of his life Barbara Shenning for 66 years. Besides his wife, he leaves his six children, Cathy Lappen of Manchester; Wayne (Jennifer) Lappen of Woodbury Vermont; Mark (Kristi) Lappen of South Windsor; Walter (Tracey) Lappen of Southington; Earl (Katherine) Lappen of Manchester; Kyle (Denise) Anderson of Colonia New Jersey; his sister Barbara (Robert) Johnson of St. Petersburg Florida; his sister-in-law Jeanne Lappen of Tolland; his sister-in-law Rita Lappen of Port Orange Florida; his thirteen grandchildren, Tyler Lappen, Jessica Lappen and Kelly Lappen; Nicholas (Carlie) Lappen, John Lappen, Michael Lappen and Kyle Lappen; Aspen Tucker; Kyle Anderson, Olivia Anderson, Nyah Anderson, Bryan Anderson and Derek Anderson. He was predeceased by his brothers Richard Lappen of Daytona Beach Florida, Howard Lappen of South Windsor and his brother in-law Roy (Zelda) Shenning of Brandon Florida. In addition to his immediate family, he is also survived by fourteen nieces and nephews and their families. He cared deeply for his family including his many cousins.

Jack was a great man who had many friends and will be deeply missed. Special thanks to his neighbor and dear friend, Dr. Fadi Hammami who helped guide Jack's care in his later years. The family also extends their gratitude to Jack's daughter Cathy Lappen whose love and unending dedication to his care was simply incredible.

In lieu of flowers, charitable donations may be made in his honor to the Alzheimer's Association or the National Kidney Foundation. Services will be held at a future date at the discretion of the family.

Please sign guestbook at courant.com/obituaries

Veneziano III , Michael Joseph

Michael Joseph Veneziano III of Berlin, CT, 53, beloved husband of Lara (Meyers) Veneziano, passed away at his home on Wednesday, December 15, 2021 with his loving family by his side. Mike was born in New Britain on January 5, 1968 to Michael J. Jr. and Beverly (Tierney) Veneziano. Growing up in Berlin, Mike graduated from Berlin High School where he played basketball for four years and was the captain during his senior year. Afterwards, Mike graduated Mitchell College with an Associate's degree where he met his wife Lara and then went to Southern Connecticut State University where he received his Bachelor's degree. The two of them then went on to live in New York City where Mike worked at the American Stock Exchange until 9/11. He then returned with his wife and two sons to Berlin, CT where he was a very active member of the community. He and his wife Lara established Northeast Safety Shoes. Mike was the Boys' Basketball coach at Berlin High School for 13 years. He also coached both of his son's baseball teams in Berlin Little League for many years. Mike was also a member of Indian Hill Golf Course in Newington. He enjoyed all sports and was an avid Red Sox fan. Besides his wife and parents, Mike is survived by two sons, Robert Joseph (RJ) and Anthony Michael Veneziano, two sisters, Roxane Marie Veneziano of Stamford, CT and Andrea Michelle Veneziano Trembath of Cornelius, NC, brother-in-law Mitchell Meyers and his wife Allison Meyers of Huntington Station, NY, father-in-law Spencer Meyers of New Smyrna Beach, FL, two nieces, Clara Rose Veneziano of Stamford, CT and Charlotte Tierney Trembath of Cornelius, NC, and nephew Shane Meyers of Huntington Station, NY. Calling hours will be held at the Berlin Memorial Funeral Home, 96 Main Street, Kensington, CT on Monday, December 20, 2021 from 4:00pm – 7:00pm. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at St. Paul's Church in Kensington, CT on Tuesday, December 21, 2021 at 10:00am. Burial will be at the convenience of the family. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to St. Jude's Children's Hospital, a charity that Mike supported regularly.

Berlin Memorial Funeral Home



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Tierney, Elinor D.

Elinor D. Tierney passed peacefully away surrounded by loved ones on December 15, 2021. Born Elinor Mary Donoghue on May 22, 1927, to James A and Margaret Mulranan in Cambridge, MA, she was one of seven children. She was predeceased by her husband Richard of 59 years, 3 brothers and a sister. After marrying Richard in 1951, they moved to Maine, followed by Massachusetts before settling in Manchester.

Elinor (Ellie) raised five children whom she was very proud of: Nancy Durig (Robert) of Overland Park, KS, Mary Tierney (Dennis Jenkins) of Coventry, Christine Tierney (John Igneri) of Rowayton, Richard of Oban, Scotland and Megan Tierney of South Windsor. Elinor was the devoted grandmother of 10: Daniel (Catherine), Kerry (Ian), Shannon (Mike), Michael (Emily), Donald (Rachel), Anna (Jen), Caitlin (James), Ben (Sydney), Caleigh (Abner), and Brigid (Jason) and great[1][1] grandmother of 8 as well numerous nieces, nephews and grand-nieces and nephews.

Elinor's first love was her family to whom she was very devoted. She was game to try anything that her family was doing and stayed current with technology to be able to communicate, learning how to Zoom during the pandemic so she could participate in lively weekly meetings with her children and how to text and use Instagram to stay in touch with her grandchildren and great grandchildren.

As the matriarch for the entire family, she was the favorite aunt and great aunt. She made everyone feel special, remembering details about their lives. She and Richard were great entertainers: there was bound to be a lot of fun when people came to the Tierney's. Elinor was a highly skilled and competitive game player. An avid reader, she was also passionate about movies. Being a huge UConn Women's Basketball fan, she had a dream come true attending the Final Four in Atlanta. Elinor traveled extensively and always had a bucket list of places she still wanted to see. Ellie had a large circle of friends to whom she was very devoted and was well known for her great sense of humor, her ability to tell a great story and her generosity. She worked at the Institute of Living for many years taking new doctors under her wing to make them feel welcome. Elinor was a person of deep faith continuing to practice and explore it her entire life.

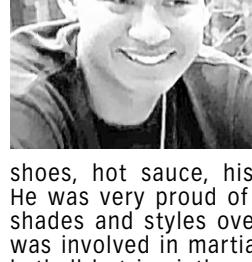
Elinor will be greatly missed by the many people whose lives she touched. Memories of her life and funeral services will be celebrated at a later date and time to be announced. For online condolences and service updates, please visit www.tierneyfuneralhome.com.

JOHN F.

Tierney

TIERNEYFUNERALHOME.COM

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Williamson, Sean A.

Sean A. Williamson, 16, son of Daniel and Catherine (Day) Williamson of Manchester, passed unexpectedly from this life and into eternal life on Tuesday, December 14, 2021.

He will always be remembered by his loving family and friends. Sean was a kind, fun-loving, funny, and intelligent person. He loved clothes, shoes, hot sauce, his dogs and his rabbit, Lettuce.

He was very proud of his hair which had a variety of shades and styles over the years. As a young boy he was involved in martial arts, played baseball and basketball but in sixth grade he began to concentrate on one of his greatest passions – the sport of soccer. He made many wonderful friends through soccer.

Sean was in our lives for far too short a time but we are forever grateful that he was, and will always be, a part of our family. He gave us an enormous amount of joy, and he will be in our hearts forever.

He is survived by his parents Daniel and Catherine, his brother Conor, grandmother Jeanette Day; aunts and uncles Patricia (Paul) Misselwitz of West Chester, PA, Kenneth (Marjorie) Williamson of East Hartford, CT, James (Cara) Williamson of Middletown, CT, Thomas (Lesia) Day of Andover, CT, David (Audrey) Day of Sherman, CT, and Edward (Joan) Day of Andover, CT; as well as numerous cousins and friends. He was predeceased by his grandparents, Richard T. Day, and Weldon and Annira Williamson.

Family and friends may call at the John F. Tierney Funeral Home, 219 W. Center St., Manchester, on Monday, December 20th, 2021, from 4 – 7 pm. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held on Tuesday, December 21st, at 10:00 a.m. St. Bartholomew Church, 736 Middle Turnpike, Manchester, (please meet at church), followed by burial at St. James Cemetery. For online condolences, please visit www.tierneyfuneralhome.com.

In lieu of flowers, please make donations to the Hartford Catholic Worker (hartfordcatholicworker.org) or the Guatemala Stove Project (guatemalastoveproject.org).

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WILCOX, Douglas Allan

Douglas Allan Wilcox, 67, lifelong Wethersfield resident, passed away peacefully, Tuesday, December 14, 2021 at home, surrounded by his family. Born in Hartford, November 12, 1954, Doug was a shining light of joy and innocence in the lives of all who knew him. Doug loved sports, participating in the first Connecticut Special Olympics Games; as a batboy for the 1975 Wethersfield High School baseball team; and bowling with David Benson of Connecticut DDS in his later years. He read the sports page every day. His favorite teams were the Denver Broncos and the Los Angeles Dodgers. Doug also loved music and dancing, entertaining his family and friends with his drumming, singing, and band concert conducting. He loved a good party, and was usually the last one to leave the dance floor. Most of all, Doug loved his family, enjoying countless occasions with his extended family and friends.

Doug attended Wethersfield schools until the age of 21. He was a member of one of the first classes of special needs students in the Wethersfield school system through the advocacy of former Superintendent of Schools, William J. Moriarty. Doug worked at Robinson & Cole Law Firm, Hartford for many years, through the HARC supported employment program.

Doug leaves the most important person in his life, his loving and incredibly devoted mother, Isabel (Raynard) Wilcox. Her devotion and advocacy for Doug were with him every day of his life. He was a devoted brother to his two sisters, Jill Wilcox Still of Barnstable, MA, and Betsy Warner of Nazareth, PA; brother-in-law to James Still and Craig Warner. In addition, Doug was a loving uncle to Ryan Still, Derek Still, Colin Still, and David Warner; and great uncle to Finley Still, Grady Still, and Ronan Still. Doug was pre-deceased by a nephew, Andrew Warner.

The Wilcox family extends their heartfelt thanks to the staff of Masonicare Hospice, especially Denise and Eric, and to Lynn as well, for her care and comfort in Doug's final days. The family also extends a special thanks to all the caregivers and advocates of Doug throughout his life.

Funeral services for Doug will be private and at the convenience of his family. In honor and remembrance of Doug, the family suggests those who are inclined, to make a charitable contribution to a charity of the donor's choice, which serves those with special needs. Doug's funeral arrangements have been entrusted to the D'Esopo Funeral Chapels, Wethersfield. To extend online condolences, please visit desopofuneralchapel.com.

D'Esopo
Funeral Chapel

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Scrooge, Santa and the Savior



**Scrooge came by Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol."
Santa came by folklore from the North Pole.
The SAVIOR came by GOD through a UNIQUE BIRTH!**

HOW? Before UNBELIEVING AHAZ God points out His Son: "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name IMMANUEL [God with us]" (Isaiah 7:14). "For unto us a CHILD IS BORN, unto us a SON IS GIVEN: and the government shall be upon HIS SHOULDER: and HIS NAME shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). JOSEPH BELIEVED: "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His name IMMANUEL, which being interpreted is, GOD WITH US" (Matthew 1:23). YOU CAN BELIEVE: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

WHO ME? YES YOU! "Verily (positively), I (the Lord Jesus) say unto YOU, He that HEARETH MY WORD, and BELIEVETH on Him that sent Me, hath EVERLASTING LIFE, and shall NOT come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto LIFE" (John 5:24). "For Christ also hath ONCE suffered for sins, the JUST for the UNJUST, that HE might BRING US TO GOD" (1 Peter 3:18). "Then spoke Jesus again unto them, saying, I AM the LIGHT of the world: he that FOLLOWETH ME shall NOT walk in darkness, but shall have the LIGHT of LIFE" (John 8:12). "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: And I GIVE unto them ETERNAL LIFE; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand" (John 10:27-28). "Then said Jesus to those Jews which BELIEVED ON HIM, if ye continue in MY WORD, then are ye MY disciples indeed; And ye shall know the TRUTH, and the TRUTH shall make you free" (John 8:31-32).

GIFTS which you may or may not give and receive cannot be compared with GOD'S LIFE, LIGHT and TRUTH, all of which are to be found in GOD'S best and greatest GIFT, His UNIQUE SON.

GREETINGS which you may give and receive cannot be compared to God's Word: "Peace I leave with you, MY PEACE I give unto you: nor as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

GLADNESS you can have if you will rest and rely upon HIS SURE WORD and HIS SAVING WORK on the cross, to bring you into a RIGHT RELATIONSHIP with the living God; that Christ may dwell in your heart upon your RECEIVING HIM as your personal SAVIOR and LORD. "But as many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His Name" (John 1:12). Trusting in such a great Savior we can sing:

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As COVID-19 cases rise, no remote learning plans



As COVID-19 cases rise in Connecticut schools, there are no plans for remote learning. JESSICA HILL/SPECIAL TO THE COURANT

By Adria Watson

CT Mirror

A year ago a COVID-19 infection rate over 8% in Connecticut might have led to school shutdowns, but nearly two years into the pandemic, educators say they are much better prepared.

There are no plans in Connecticut school districts for a return to remote learning — despite last week's 8% spike and an ongoing COVID-19 surge.

"Our districts definitely have mitigation measures in place, such as masking and social distancing, and they have strong muscle memories of the previous two years on how to really mitigate that spread. So we're confident our districts will be able to implement those procedures," said Eric Scoville, a spokesperson for the state education department.

Confirmed cases in schools have risen steadily over the last several weeks. The state reported Thursday that 2,483 K-12 students tested positive for COVID over the last seven days — a 408% increase over the number of positive cases on Nov. 3. Of those students, 1,951 were not fully vaccinated, 294 were fully vaccinated and 238 were unknown.

Scoville added that because the state is not requiring districts to offer remote learning, there are no plans or standards in place to implement remote learning in schools at this time. The only students currently engaging in that learning model are those who have to quarantine.

"With that being said, there is a remote learning commission that's currently meeting and kind of studying this issue and they have to come up with recommendations on the feasibility of a statewide remote learning system in the future," Scoville said, adding, "that would be for next year."

Some districts have used the screen and stay program the

Turn to Learning, Page 2

Concerns rise over power grid

Home heating oil dealers urge halt to natural gas conversions, electric heating

By Stephen Singer

Hartford Courant

Home heating oil dealers are calling on New England's governors to halt utility-funded conversions to natural gas and electric heating systems, saying the practice will strain the region's electric grid. State energy officials and environmentalists say the oil dealers' argument is backward and is delaying efforts to reduce and eventually end the use of carbon-based fuel.

Home heating oil dealers on Thursday cited recent warnings from ISO-New England, the region's grid operator, that controlled blackouts are possible if winter weather turns bitterly cold, stressing natural gas supplies.

The oil dealers, most of which are family-owned, pointed to extensive damage to the Texas grid in February in the wake of powerful storms, warning that New England's grid could face the same crisis. The region's six states "have utility-funded programs in place promoting the installation of heating systems that threaten to further constrain our critical energy infrastructure," they said.

"Knowing all this, how can our states justify encouraging more residents to convert to natural gas and electric heat pumps," the dealers said.

Sean Cota, president of the New England Fuel Institute, which represents the home heating fuels industry in the region, said the states need to put a hold on a "rapid movement of electrification of heat because that will only reinforce a weak grid where we've not planned out or allocated enough resources for the electric grid to continue at capacity."

State energy officials and environmental advocates dismissed those arguments.

Will Healey, spokesman for the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, said the "fossil fuel lobby predictably doesn't want our grid to be powered by sources other than fossil fuels, which do some of the most damage to our environment, and are trying to leverage the tragedy in Texas with false claims."

ISO-New England, the region's grid operator, has "not indicated an emergency scenario is on the horizon," he said.

Melissa Birchard, senior regulatory

Turn to Power, Page 2



House Republican Leader Vin Candelora is asking for public hearings on Gov. Ned Lamont's plan to roll out a digital COVID-19 vaccination card. DANIELA ALTIMARI/HARTFORD COURANT

GOP skeptical about digital vaccination cards

Republicans say Lamont's plan could lead to data breaches

By Daniela Altamari

Hartford Courant

Republicans in the legislature ramped up their criticism of Gov. Ned Lamont's voluntary electronic COVID-19 vaccination card, saying it could expose a user's data and lead to unvaccinated people being barred from essential businesses.

At a press conference Friday, House Republican Leader Vin Candelora said the process behind the digital passport program that will formally launch by the state Department of Public Health next week has been shrouded in secrecy.

"The governor rolled out [the program] without any input from the legislature," he said. "I continue to ask my Democratic colleagues 'when are you going to stop standing on the sidelines and begin to have the conversations about what role the legislature should be playing on these very important policy

decisions?'"

A spokesman for Gov. Ned Lamont showed up at the Republican press conference and pushed back at the critics, saying the program is not mandatory and medical data will be protected.

"Which one of these is easier?" asked communications director Max Reiss, displaying his paper vaccination card in one hand and his phone displaying a QR-code that contains information about his vaccination in the other.

"This flimsy card that doesn't even fit in my wallet," Reiss said.

The dispute over the digital vaccination card is the latest schism between the parties over management of the pandemic. It comes as Connecticut and the rest of the nation is seeing a COVID-19 surge that is filling up hospitals and raising concern

Turn to Cards, Page 2

Search begins for federal courthouse location in Hartford

By Kenneth R. Gosselin

Hartford Courant

HARTFORD — The search for a location for a new federal courthouse in Hartford has been launched after the estimated \$270 million project got a significant funding boost from the U.S. Congress a year ago.

A notice obtained by The Courant that has been sent to real estate brokers and others said federal officials are looking for potential sites within Hartford. The notice did not limit the sites to downtown Hartford.

The U.S. General Services Administration said that it was looking for a site between two and five acres for a building that would be about 281,000 square feet in size.

The new courthouse would

old court within the Abraham A. Ribicoff Federal Building and Courthouse in downtown Hartford. A new courthouse has been discussed for years, and in 2020, the courthouse was listed as the top one needing replacement across the country.

A groundbreaking could still be several years away.

Paul Hughes, a spokesman for the GSA in Boston, said Friday that the search is still in the early stages, even before detailed proposals. The GSA, he said, is trying to get a sense of what the options are in the city.

The GSA is only seeking basic information about potential sites and that this "is the start of a complex process and is subject to Congressional authorization and availability of funds," Hughes said.

More information can be



The federal government is now looking for potential sites for a new federal courthouse in Hartford that would replace an outdated one in the Abraham A. Ribicoff Federal Building and Courthouse on Main Street. COURANT FILE PHOTO

obtained by emailing Sara Massarelli at the GSA in Boston at sara.massarelli@gsa.gov. The "requests for expressions of interest" are due by Jan. 31.

A year ago, \$135 million was earmarked for the project and is just the first appropriation that would be needed to finance the new courthouse. The funds also would have to be authorized to be spent on the project.

Connecticut's Congressional delegation has been a strong advocate for the new courthouse. Sen. Richard Blumenthal last year said the existing courthouse, part of the Ribicoff complex, had outlived its "sell-by" date. A new facility would bring judicial civil and criminal operations into the 21st

Turn to Courthouse, Page 2

TikTok warning ramps up stress for Connecticut parents, schools

By Don Stacom

Hartford Courant

As anxiety from a nationwide threat on TikTok ramped up, attendance at some Connecticut schools dipped sharply Friday even as educators brought in extra police to reassure nervous parents and students.

Wolcott schools ended classes several hours early, nearly a third of Glastonbury High School's students stayed home and schools in Norwich and the Region 10 towns of Burlington and Harwinton stayed closed for the day.

After months of pressure about masks, COVID-19 restrictions and an uptick in student misbehavior, the weeklong tension over social media threats ended with many educators and parents exhausted.

"What if one out of the hundreds of threats happens at my child's school? I'm

Turn to TikTok, Page 2

CONNECTICUT

No arrests in Windsor Amazon noose placement

Authorities say case remains open

By Susan Dunne

Hartford Courant

After an extensive investigation, "investigators were unable to establish probable cause," in the April 24 discovery of a noose on the Windsor site where an Amazon warehouse was being constructed, police announced in a news release on Friday.

In a case that attracted national attention due to its racial overtones, and slowed progress on the development at 1201 Kennedy Road, a noose was found at the site on April 24, hanging from a beam. Within a week, five more noose-like hanging ropes were found on the construction site. Within four weeks, a total of eight nooses had been found.

Friday's release from Capt. Andrew Power said the case, into the placement of the first noose, will be kept open as long as the statute of limitations allows,

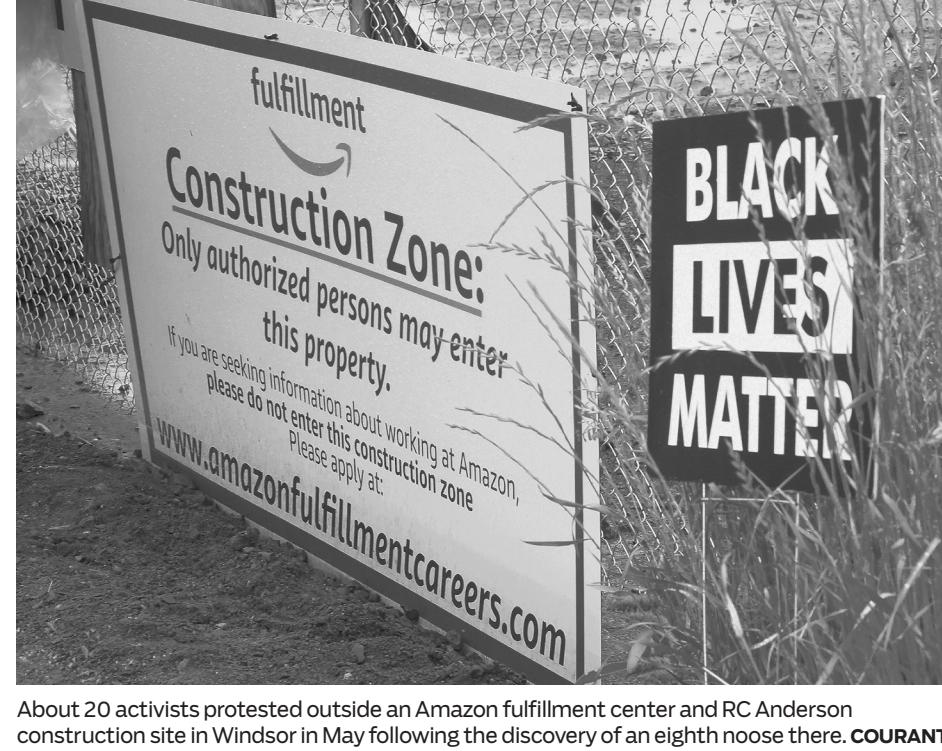
in case more information is uncovered. Amazon has established a \$100,000 reward for information on the responsible party.

The case was investigated with the FBI, Connecticut State Police and Hartford State's Attorney's Office.

"Numerous interviews of Amazon construction site personnel were conducted, including steel workers, electricians, safety and security workers, and administrative personnel, as well as others not directly involved in the construction site. Investigators reviewed personnel records of multiple employees, camera footage, and shift logs," Power's statement read.

People identified as "persons of interest" were scheduled for polygraph tests, Power wrote. Those tests were conducted, after which time the people tested withdrew from the investigation.

"These persons of inter-



About 20 activists protested outside an Amazon fulfillment center and RC Anderson construction site in Windsor in May following the discovery of an eighth noose there. COURANT FILE PHOTO

est discussed that they believed they were being targeted on the theory that

they hung the noose to get off the job in hopes of getting a prevailing wage,

higher paying job at a different site," Power wrote.

The lack of surveillance

cameras in the spots where the nooses were found hampered the investigation, as did the fact that workers from many companies were active at the site. Since the discovery of the nooses, additional cameras were installed and regular police patrols established.

The discovery of the nooses set off turmoil in the town, with racial justice activists and workers of color at the site demanding action in what was seen as an ominously racist discovery.

In a May news conference on the site, the NAACP referred to the hanging of the nooses as "hate crimes." Local activist groups, including PowerUp CT, the Self Defense Brigade, the Huey P. Newton Gun Club and the New Black Panthers, held protests on the site in support of workers there.

Susan Dunne can be reached at sdunne@courant.com.

Learning

from Page 1

state launched in November to help keep students in classrooms. Screen and Stay is a voluntary protocol for districts that allows students who come in contact with a COVID-infected classmate to be screened for symptoms and remain in class instead of having to stay home, sometimes for up to two weeks.

In Hartford, a total of 149 students have participated in Screen and Stay since the district implemented the program last month, said the district's Director of Nursing and Clinical Services Deb Chameides.

"It certainly keeps children in the classroom," Chameides said, explaining that those 149 children were considered close contacts to a positive case and either quarantined for 10 days or returned back to class on the eighth day of quarantine after testing negative.

"We also offer quarantine with a test option on days five through seven and return on day eight," she said. "So those are children who would have missed school, in-person learning had parents not chosen for screen and stay for them."

One school in Hartford reported having fewer than six cases last week, according to the state's data. The district's cumulative numbers, from July 1-Dec. 8, show that there have been 454 student cases, 123 staff cases and 2,723 student quarantines.

Chameides said Hartford is continuing to stress to school administrators, educators, students and their families that the mitigation strategies they've had in place since last year are still important to follow a year later.

"Masks are still required per governor's order and are strictly adhered to in all of our school buildings. All of our students are still masking," she said, adding that they are also promoting as much distancing as possible in the schools, reminding children to wash their hands frequently, reminding

families not to send their students to school when they're sick, and to let them know if their child is considered a close contact or has been exposed to somebody with COVID-19.

"This school year, we have not seen many cases of in-school transmission, which tells us that our mitigation practices really do work, that we're not seeing COVID spread in school, that it's a result of community transmission, and I think the increased cases in the schools are the result of increased cases of community transmission."

Connecticut Education Association (CEA) President Kate Dias said the higher positivity rates are not surprising.

"I think we weren't sure how high they were going to go. We weren't sure what was going to look like," Dias said, adding that the CEA has been tracking the numbers very closely for conversations they are having about masking protocols and to see if the Screen and Stay protocol provides enough protection.

Dias explained that educators are supportive of Screen and Stay, but express concerns about whether schools should be testing a random sample of people to see where there might be hot spots since they do not understand how the virus transmits differently among the vaccinated and unvaccinated, how Screen and Stay is being implemented, how schools are following through with it, and what the efficacy of the program is.

"We recognize the importance of keeping kids in school, but want to do that in the most responsible way possible," Dias said. "So if there are questions about the implementation of [screen and stay], I think they're trying to flush those out with their administration. And that's really on a case-by-case because districts have some discretion about how to implement that protocol so that it's smoothly entered into their system, be it computer-based or paper system."

Cards

from Page 1

as families come together for the approaching holidays. The new COVID-19 omicron variant is highly transmissible and public health officials believe it will soon be pervasive.

Republicans say they are concerned that participation in the program could become mandatory, despite assurances from the Lamont administration that it will remain voluntary.

"It's voluntary for the businesses that chose to use it but it's going to become mandatory for the Connecticut residents that want to be able to access those businesses," Candelora said. "We could have situations where there are companies ... that could deny access to get prescription drugs, to get other goods and services."

Reiss said that's simply not true. "We have made it abundantly clear this is something that's voluntary," he said.

He accused Republicans

of "fearmongering."

"It's frankly probably irresponsible because we're talking about public health information," Reiss said. "This is not a passport, we are not requiring it. This is not something that is coming down the pike. Gov. Lamont has been abundantly clear that new mandates are not something he is interested in."

Many sports and arts venues already requiring proof of vaccination — or of a negative coronavirus test — prior to attendance; Cande-

lora said he had to show his vaccine card to attend a game at Yankee Stadium. He said he does not object to the requirement for admission to events and restaurants. But he said he is worried that it could be extended to grocery stores, pharmacies and other essential businesses.

The digital card can be downloaded from the state Department of Public Health website: <https://ctwiz.dph.ct.gov/ctwiz/public/Application/Public-Portal>.

Power

from Page 1

attorney and director of the Clean Energy Program at Acadia Center, an advocacy group seeking to cut carbon emissions, defended policies expanding electrification.

"The short- and long-term answer is to help residents shift from reliance on volatile fossil fuels to electric alternatives that are cleaner, safer and equally comfortable," she said.

The oil dealers say they do not oppose net-zero emission goals. "On the contrary, we share them," they said. The industry said it has committed to reduce

emissions 15% by 2023, 40% by 2030 and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 using blends of renewable liquid heating fuels.

Connecticut oil dealers have battled the state before. Business owners fiercely opposed the energy policies of then-Gov. Dannel P. Malloy nearly 10 years ago that encouraged businesses and homeowners to connect to natural gas, arguing it was then cheaper than oil.

Oil dealers now justify their opposition to conversion to natural gas and electrification by citing warnings of ISO-New England on Dec. 6 that power outages are possible if the winter turns bitterly

cold and high demand saps fuel supplies. The Holyoke, Mass.-based grid operator said it will meet consumer demand if the winter is mild, but a severe and prolonged cold snap could require emergency actions, including controlled blackouts, if generators lack access to fuel.

"We're trying to help avoid a catastrophic failure," said Christian Herb, president of the Connecticut Energy Marketers Association.

He criticized ISO-New England for "looking to manage the grid by shutting communities off."

"Someone needs to have a better plan than we're

going to shut off New Haven County to try to make sure that the entire New England grid doesn't collapse," he said.

Birchard said the industry is making misleading claims about ISO-New England's warnings to justify a "backward response" calling for a moratorium on natural gas conversions and electric pump expansion. Offshore wind and solar power panels are the future, she said.

"We need to move as quickly as we can," Birchard said.

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Courthouse

from Page 1

century, Blumenthal said.

On Friday, U.S. Rep. John B. Larson, D-1st, said he would continue to push for funding for the project.

"Hartford rightfully deserves a new courthouse," Larson said, in a statement.

"I will continue to advocate for this new courthouse and the funding that's needed. I look forward to working with GSA, city leaders and ultimately the builders to see this project through."

Construction of a new courthouse is seen as needed to tackle significant, ongoing security, space and building condition problems, a spokesman for the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, has said.

Prisoner movement is through public corridors and through public entrances of each courtroom because the

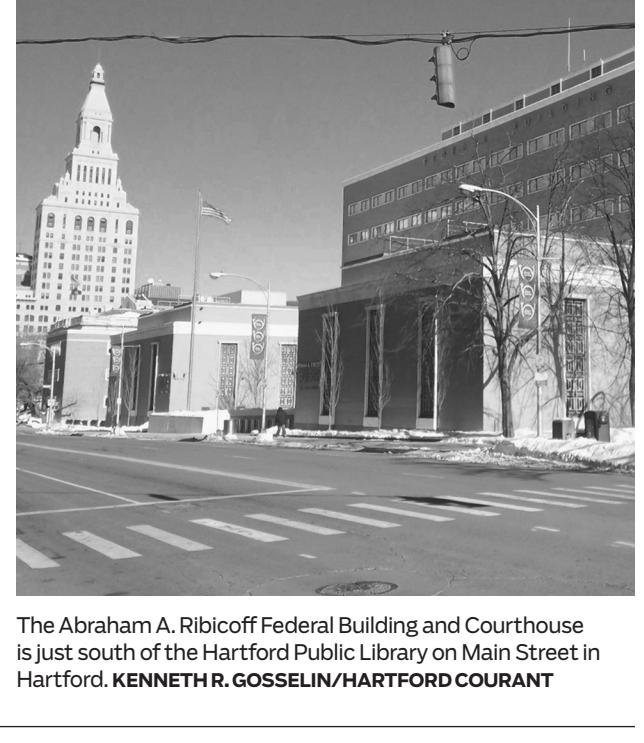
layout of the building does not allow for separation of public, prisoner, judge and staff movement.

The sally port where prisoners are transported to and from the court isn't big enough. The location of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement offices in the building are also a problem, the office said.

The existing courthouse now has eight courtrooms and 11 chambers, many of which do not meet modern size standards. A new courthouse would have 11 courtrooms and 18 chambers for 18 judges.

If a new courthouse is built, it is likely the Ribicoff building, built in 1963 named after a former governor and U.S. senator in 1980, would still be used for a consolidation of federal offices.

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The Abraham A. Ribicoff Federal Building and Courthouse is just south of the Hartford Public Library on Main Street in Hartford. **KENNETH R. GOSSELIN/HARTFORD COURANT**

TikTok

from Page 1

not about to make my children go to school when they are fearful and anxiety-ridden," said Susan Wood Donis, a Southington mother who kept her middle school and high school students home both Thursday and Friday.

"They are already dealing with more than we ever did at their age. I am just not willing to take the risk. And I am not going to be shamed for it," she said Friday afternoon.

Online threats began a couple of weeks before the Dec. 14 anniversary of the Sandy Hook massacre, starting with handful of schools in Hamden, Anson-

nia, Norwalk and elsewhere. Those threats — usually warning of an impending shooting or other violence — appeared to come from local students, and several led to arrests.

But in the past week, the pattern widened significantly: One or more threats circulated on TikTok calling for youngsters across the country to bring guns to school or disrupt classes.

That led dozens of school systems to have additional police either in their buildings or stationed in their parking lots Friday. In Glastonbury, about 30 percent of high school and middle school students stayed home Friday, compared to a typical daily average of about 6 percent, Superintendent Alan Book-

man said.

"The rumor originated on TikTok and went viral for several days while also making its way onto other social media platforms," New Britain Superintendent Nancy Sarra told parents in an email Thursday that promised extra police at city schools. "Numerous law enforcement agencies around the country have also received tips related to these rumors."

At least three school systems this week reported indications of threats specifically against them: Norwich and Region 10 administrators decided late Thursday to call off classes for Friday. In Southington, educators on Monday found a warning — scrawled on a high school bathroom

about violence on Thursday.

"The recent graffiti threat citing violence on Dec. 16 was investigated thoroughly by the police and high school administration and nothing was substantiated, nor have there been any new threats or information gleaned from incident since," Superintendent Steven Madancy reported Friday.

But as word of the graffiti spread through the school early in the week, dozens of parents on the Facebook page Southington Talks declared they'd be keeping their children home. Others posted different views, saying the graffiti was a hoax and the TikTok threats were phony too.

Those differences boiled over into online arguments

that

only

made

things

worse,

Donis said.

"The forums are becoming a back and forth of 'kids and parents are sissies' vs 'kids and parents are justified' for feeling this way. It's exactly like the Covid vaccine conversation," she said. "Parental support of one another is just non-existent. The pressure is unreal."

Educators were frustrated, too. Numerous schools had lockdowns or one-day closings over the past two weeks, disrupting the teaching rhythm that instructors were already struggling to maintain during the pandemic. Meanwhile, online rumors have increased parents' fears.

"There was misinfor-

mation about a second

threat yesterday because

students saw extra officers in the building," Madancy said Friday. "All they were doing was surveying spaces throughout the day to see if a repeat might occur. It simply wasn't true, and yet we had to send out another email to families to quell that rumor."

"I believe the recent incident in Michigan has shaken the public's trust in how threats are handled, whether they are taken seriously, and whether districts are purposefully withholding information to reduce anxiety or minimize the seriousness of some situations. That perception only compounds trust issues," Madancy said. "This has only added a layer to an already complex time in school districts right now."

CONNECTICUT

Man facing child sex charges fired from CNN

Mother of child charged

By Jesse Leavenworth

Hartford Courant

A Connecticut man who faces federal charges of trying to entice minors for sex was fired from his job as a CNN producer, a spokesman for the cable network said Friday.

Meanwhile, a Nevada woman faces charges connected to the case of John Griffin, 44, of Stamford. Federal authorities and police in Henderson, Nevada, say the woman brought her 9-year-old adopted daughter to Griffin's Vermont ski house, where the girl was forced to participate in sex with Griffin and the woman.

Federal authorities say Griffin, 44, persuaded the woman he could "train" the girl in sexual subservience. Griffin also tried to lure other minors for the same purpose,

authorities said. Arrested last week, he faces three counts of using a facility of interstate commerce to attempt to entice minors to engage in unlawful sexual activity. Griffin was being held pending a hearing in U.S. District Court in Vermont.

CNN spokesman Matt Dornic said Griffin was fired soon after his arrest. Griffin worked for former CNN anchor Chris Cuomo and was most recently working on the morning show and producing the Reality Check segment, Dornic said.

From April to July 2020, federal authorities say Griffin used the messaging applications Kik and Google Hangouts to communicate with people purporting to be parents of minor daughters and seeking to persuade parents to let him train their daughters to be sexually submissive, according to the indictment.

In June 2020, Griffin advised the Nevada woman that she had to ensure her daughter

was "trained properly," federal officials said. Griffin later transferred over \$3,000 to the woman for plane tickets so she and the girl could fly to Boston. Griffin picked them up in his red Tesla Model X in July and drove them to his Ludlow, Vermont, house, where the indictment says the daughter was "directed to engage in, and did engage in, unlawful sexual activity."

Henderson police said the woman brought a bag full of sex toys to the ski house and made the girl participate in sex with her and Griffin, according to an arrest warrant affidavit. The woman was arrested last year in Nevada on eight counts each of child abuse and lewdness with a minor under age 14 and two counts of sexual assault of a minor under 14. Some of the charges are related to crimes police say were committed in Nevada, but they also cited preparations the woman made for the trip to Vermont to add charges for crimes committed in that state.

Based on Griffin paying the woman to fly east with the girl and other factors, she "did commit acts in the state of Nevada with the intent, partial execution, and which culminated in the commission of a crime that occurred in the state of Vermont, (she) should be punished in the same manner as if the crime had been committed entirely in this state," the arrest warrant affidavit says.

The Courant is not naming the woman because doing so could identify the girl, an alleged victim of sexual assault.

Griffin faces a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in prison on each count in the federal indictment. Also, the government intends to seek forfeiture of his Ludlow house, his Tesla, a Mercedes and other property that was used in the commission of the charged offenses, authorities said.

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Children of couple killed seek help finding driver

By Christine Dempsey

Hartford Courant

A second person has died after being struck in Seymour last week by a hit-and-run driver.

Barbara Tamborra, 81, died Wednesday night at Saint Mary's Hospital in Waterbury, Deputy Chief Roberto Rinaldi said Thursday. She and her husband, James Tamborra, also 81, had been crossing Bank Street, or Route 67, with help from an officer at the time of the Dec. 10 collision. James Tamborra died later that night.

Police continue to look for the car police said struck the couple, a dark-colored, 2014-2016 Acura MDX. Rinaldi said the passenger-side headlight assembly is damaged.

The deadly collision happened shortly after 6 p.m., when Officer Dedrick Wilcox was helping the couple cross the street near the Miller-Ward Funeral Home, where they had attended a wake. An east-bound car "approached them at a high rate of speed," police said.

Wilcox signaled for the vehicle to stop, but it did not, and nearly struck him. The officer was able to move out of the way before it struck the Tamboras and continued on without stopping, police said.

The Tamboras' children this week tearfully asked the public to help the police find the person responsible.

"They want justice and closure," Rinaldi said. "This is going to affect them the rest of their lives around the holidays."

Anyone who saw the hit-and-run or who might have information about the car is asked to call police, who took the unusual step of releasing the lead investigator's cellphone number: Police Commander David Parratt may be reached at 203-881-7610 or on his work cell at 203-915-2517, police said.

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Man sentenced to 15 years for rape in East Hartford; mother goes to jail

By Jesse Leavenworth

Hartford Courant

A registered sex offender was sentenced Thursday to at least 15 years behind bars for raping a little boy in East Hartford and possessing child pornography.

Paul Grimsley's case was notable because the mother of his victim tried to make a deal with him after discovering Grimsley had a photo of him molesting her son, East Hartford police have said.

Grimsley, 44, pleaded guilty in Hartford Superior Court to first-degree sexual assault and first-degree possession of child pornography, prosecutor Debra A. Collins said. His total effective sentence is 40 years, suspended after 18 years, of which 15 years are mandatory to serve. Grimsley pleaded under the Alford Doctrine, which means he did not admit to the crimes but conceded the state had enough evidence to convict him.

When East Hartford police arrested him in 2019, Grimsley already was a lifetime registered sex offender after convictions for risk of injury to a minor and possession of child pornography in 2002 and 2008, Collins said.

In the 2019 case, police said Grimsley, who was living on Alden Street in Hartford at the time, sexually abused a 6-year-old boy and also had more than 250 images of child pornography on a cellphone. Police say Grimsley was a friend of the boy's mother, who found images of him assaulting her child and then tried to cut a deal with him.

"During their conversation, it was discussed that Grimsley would pay her \$120 for not going to the police with the information about him sexually assaulting her son," an arrest warrant affidavit said. The Courant does not name victims of sexual assault and is withholding the mother's name because it could identify the child.

The 33-year-old woman was recently convicted of risk of injury to a minor and sentenced to 10 years in prison, suspended after 4½ years, Collins said. The case of another woman who allegedly knew about the sexual abuse and did not report it is pending, she said.

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A pie-and-cake combination, with a pecan pie, pumpkin pie, spice cake and apple pie filling held together with cinnamon buttercream frosting



Christmas PieCaken is "pecan pie, eggnog cheesecake and red velvet cake layered together with amaretto buttercream and topped with sweet and tart cherry pie filling." It is sold at Sprinkletown at Foxwoods Resort Casino. **SPRINKLETOWN**

'PIECAKEN' COMES TO CONNECTICUT

Sprinkletown at Foxwoods opens, and unique bakery dessert makes its mark

By Susan Dunne
Hartford Courant

Foxwoods Resort Casino opened two new restaurants during the holiday season: Sprinkletown, the first Connecticut location of Zac Young's Chicago-based dessert bakery, and Mystic Market Kitchen & Eatery, a fifth location of the Connecticut-based gourmet bistro.

Sprinkletown specializes in "PieCaken," a combination of pie and cake, with a pecan pie, pumpkin pie, spice cake and apple pie filling held together with cinnamon buttercream frosting. Foxwoods sells that as well as the Christmas PieCaken, described on sprinkletown.com as "pecan pie, eggnog cheesecake, and red velvet cake

layered together with amaretto buttercream and topped with sweet and tart cherry pie filling." Each PieCaken is \$65 and can be ordered for pickup.

Sprinkletown also offers zacarons (short for Zac's macarons), specialty ice cream sundaes cones, stuffed cookies, piecookies, traditional cakes and other baked goods. sprinkletown.com.

Young is famed for his appearances on "Chopped" and "Top Chef: Just Desserts." The Foxwoods shop is Sprinkletown's second location.

Sprinkletown's hours are Sunday noon to 10 p.m., Monday to Thursday noon to 9 p.m. and Friday and Saturday noon to 1 a.m.

Mystic Market, which has two locations in Mystic, one in Westport and one in Old Saybrook, was founded in

2001, selling groceries and meals to-go, including salads, soups, entrees, sides and sandwiches. The shops also sell fresh-baked bread; gourmet dips, oils and sauces; and custom cakes.

The chain offers different items at each location. At Foxwoods, entrees include poultry, pasta, pork and steak, vegetarian and vegan options, swordfish, salmon, cod and shrimp and gourmet sides.

At Foxwoods, the market is on the Great Cedar concourse in the Great Cedar Hotel. Hours are will be Wednesdays and Thursdays noon to 6 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays noon to 9 p.m., and Sundays noon to 7 p.m.

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CONNECTICUT FORECAST

Hartford may get snow, then ice, Saturday

Sleet in late afternoon could cause treacherous travel

By Christine Dempsey
Hartford Courant

Going Christmas shopping or to a holiday party Saturday in the Hartford area? You may encounter snow, ice, or both.

The unusually warm temperatures will drop, and a little bit of snow may fall Saturday morning in Hartford County, with the northern part forecast to get 1-2

inches and "maybe an inch" falling in the south, Torry Gaucher, a National Weather Service meteorologist, said early Friday.

The hills of northern Connecticut may get up to 3 inches, he said.

In the afternoon and early evening, the snow may turn to an icy mix of sleet and freezing rain that could make roads slick, said meteorologist Bill Leatham.

"It could make travel hazardous," he said.

Whether conditions turn icy depends

on the exact track of a low-pressure system, he said. Meteorologists are more

confident of their forecast for Massachusetts, which could see anywhere from 1-5 inches of snow, with the most falling near the New Hampshire line.

Whatever falls from the Connecticut skies, the heaviest precipitation will be late in the day and into the night, Leatham said.

"It's just messy," he said. "If you do have to travel, leave more time to get to where you want to go."

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"It's just messy. If you do have to travel, leave more time to get to where you want to go."

— Meteorologist Bill Leatham

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LIVING

CELEBRITIES

Noth denies sex assault accusations

From news services

Actor Chris Noth has been accused of sexually assaulting two women in separate encounters that took place in 2004 and 2015, according to a report Thursday.

The women's identities were withheld by The Hollywood Reporter in order to protect their privacy.

Noth, 67, who starred in "Sex and the City" and appears in its newly released sequel, "And Just Like That...," said in a statement to the Reporter that the encounters were consensual.

"The accusations against me made by individuals I met years, even decades, ago are categorically false. These stories could've been from 30 years ago or 30 days ago — no always means no — that is a line I did not cross," Noth said in a statement.

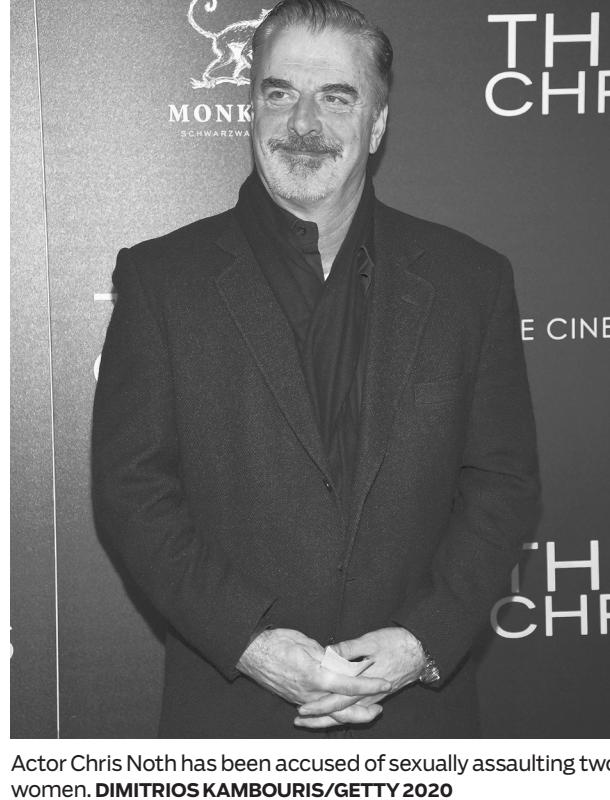
"It's difficult not to question the timing of these stories coming out. I don't know for certain why they are surfacing now, but I do know this: I did not assault these women," he said.

The two women reached out independently and months apart to the Hollywood Reporter, the publication said. One said the revival of Noth's "Sex and the City" character, a man-about-town nicknamed Mr. Big, "set something off in me" and prompted her to go public with "who he is."

Prince William reveals Christmas favorites:

Britain's Prince William has revealed some of his Christmas favorites, in response to questions from children receiving cancer treatment at a London hospital.

William told young patients at the Royal Marsden that he loves the film "Elf" starring Will Ferrell, his favorite Christmas tune is "Feliz Navidad," and that



Actor Chris Noth has been accused of sexually assaulting two women. DIMITRIOS KAMBOURIS/GETTY 2020

he loves Brussels sprouts with his turkey, roast potatoes and sausage.

William, who is second in line to the British throne, became president of the Royal Marsden in 2007.

When asked during a session recorded by the hospital's in-house radio station what he would do if he were in charge of Christmas for a day, William said he would "bring everyone together to have a big party."

"There would definitely be no COVID," he said, "and there certainly wouldn't be any cancer in the world."

Garlin leaving 'Goldbergs':

"The Goldbergs" star Jeff Garlin is leaving the ABC comedy. The comedian, who has played gruff but loving patriarch Murray Goldberg in eight seasons of the sitcom, has reached a mutual agreement with Sony Pictures Television, which produces the show, to depart the TV series.

The actor's departure comes in the wake of a human-resources investigation into his on-set behavior that stemmed from multiple complaints, according to Deadline and the Hollywood Reporter.

Earlier this month, Vanity Fair reported that Garlin had allegedly engaged in a pattern of verbal and physical conduct on set that made people uncomfortable, citing three former "Goldbergs" employees.

The comic also stars in and executive produces HBO's "Curb Your Enthusiasm" with Larry David.

Dec. 18 birthdays:

Actor Roger Mosley is 83. Guitarist Keith Richards is 78. Director Steven Spielberg is 75. Actor Ray Liotta is 67. Singer Angie Stone is 60. Actor Brad Pitt is 58. Singer Alejandra Sanz is 53. Rapper Cowboy Troy is 51. Singer Sia is 46. Actor Katie Holmes is 43. Singer Christina Aguilera is 41. Singer Billie Eilish is 20.

MUSIC REVIEW

Alicia Keys, sounding original and then digitally 'unlocked'

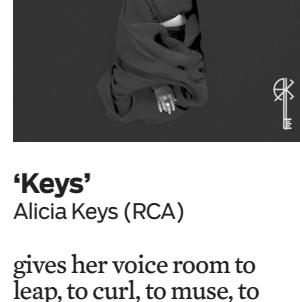
By Jon Pareles

The New York Times

"Keys," Alicia Keys' new album, is a high-concept experiment, the kind of self-conscious, introspective project that has been emerging during the pandemic. Like Keys' decision to no longer wear makeup in public, the album is in part a pushback against phony, superficial perfection. "I used to live hidden in a disguise," she sings in "Plentiful," an affirmation of both religious faith and faith in herself that opens the album.

"Keys" also exposes the options available to a 21st-century musician, the countless digital tweaks and variations. It's a double album with 21 songs, eight of them appearing twice. It begins with "Originals," tracks that Keys largely produced by herself, followed by "Unlocked": alternate versions produced by Keys with hitmaker Michael Williams II, who bills himself as Mike Will Made-It. Although the whole album is a studio production, "Originals" has a home-alone spirit, while "Unlocked" heads for the car and the club. Each half tells a different story about how songs move listeners, physically and emotionally.

The songs themselves explore desire, love and loneliness. Throughout her career, Keys has mingled the personal and the political, often invoking a woman's strength and determination. But for most of "Keys," she plays a woman in thrall to her feelings, by turns connected, needy, amorous, giving, desolate, jealous and, eventually, healing. Most of the songs vamp through a handful of chords as Keys



'Keys'
Alicia Keys (RCA)

gives her voice room to leap, to curl, to muse, to syncopate; she has rarely sounded so jazzy and improvisatory.

The track list of "Keys" isn't completely symmetrical. Each half of the album varies the sequence and includes unique songs. But anyone can now reshuffle an album, and "Keys" invites every listener to think like a producer, hearing the possibilities of timbre, propulsion, weight and context for every sound, while making clear how much those choices matter.

The "Originals" half of the album promises intimacy. Unlike her 2020 album, "Alicia," which involved dozens of collaborators, "Keys" usually brings in just a handful of musicians for each song. There's still plenty of audio illusion in her "Originals" versions, with samples (like the Sade drumbeat in "Best of Me"), multi-tracked backup vocals and scratchy-vinyl sound effects. Yet those songs determinedly conjure small, private spaces as she sings her way through mixed emotions. In the tearful "Dead End Road" she's desperately trying to save a failing relationship, hinting at Aretha Franklin in a gospel-style call-and-response with a choir that seems to be coming from inside her own head, still

encouraging her to "try to make it."

In "Only You," Keys declares, "I am nothing without you here," over reverberating piano chords, with the tempo fluctuating as if each line is occurring to her on the spot, although a band eventually joins her. And in "Is It Insane," Keys is at the piano, leading a vintage-style jazz trio through complex chords as she sings about obsessing over an ex, deepening the grain of her voice like a latter-day Billie Holiday or Nina Simone while she begs, "Take away the pain."

The "Unlocked" productions put Keys back into the digital grid that often defines current pop. After a gauzy intro, the second version of "Only You" announces the changeover with a steady, thumping beat and digitally chopped-up bits of piano and lead vocal along with sound effects, including sirens and a gunshot.

It's a sign of what's to come: heftier beats, vocal phrases crisped into hooks, guest appearances (like a nonchalant Lil Wayne spot on "Nat King Cole").

The "Unlocked" tracks have virtues of their own. They push Keys' voice upfront, with a sharper focus. They give Keys a confident strut when she's enjoying the romance in "Skydive" and "Love When You Call My Name," and they shift "Old Memories," a 1950s-tinged song about what music can trigger, from regret toward resilience.

The "Unlocked" songs sound like public performances, neat and armored and solidly 4/4, more locked than unlocked. The "Originals" hint at freer, messier, closer, unresolved feelings, daringly unguarded — and thoroughly, openly human.



ASK AMY

By Amy Dickinson

askamy@amydickinson.com Twitter@askingamy

Hairstylist tired of explaining her 'worth'

Dear Amy: I am a (female) hairstylist and own my small business. I love my profession.

Inevitably when I am with others, my profession will come up. Often times the people around me will start talking about their hairstylist and begin complaining about how expensive the services are. I hate this.

I feel immediately defensive. I know how hard I work. I wish they understood that it's not an "easy" job.

I am on my feet for six to 10 hours a day. The overhead for rent, taxes and products is high.

I'm sure people don't understand these things, but I also don't want to have to explain why I need to charge what I do every time I'm in mixed company. I feel like my income is being talked about in front of me and people are saying that I'm not worth it.

I don't know any other professions that might have to deal with this.

I would love to know how to handle this with a simple phrase, or do I have to just sit and stew?

— Knotted Up

Dear Knotted Up: I take slight exception to your assumption that people who practice other professions aren't expected to explain themselves.

Try being a lawyer, physician or plumber at a party. (Or an advice columnist.)

You don't have to justify anything when it comes to what you charge for services because every consumer has a choice, and your loyal customers obviously know that you are

worth what you charge.

You'll feel better if you dial into your pride in the worth of what you do versus feeling defensive about your right to make a good living.

(Think about that famous hair-care advertising campaign: "Why? Because I'm worth it!")

A sense of humor always helps. Try this:

Them: "Wow, I can't believe what my hairdresser charges just to cut my hair!"

You: "... Well, you could always just cut it yourself. After all, that's what I do ... otherwise, why pay someone else? Because you're worth it."

Dear Amy: Our son is engaged to his girlfriend of five months.

Prior to our knowledge of the engagement, he told us that his girlfriend's parents wanted to meet us.

I told our son that the typical "meet the parents" moment usually occurs later — and since he had been dating his girlfriend for only five months, we barely even know her.

Our son insisted, so we went along with it, and "met the parents" at a dinner at their home.

We learned afterward that our son and girlfriend were planning to get engaged, and everyone at the dinner knew that, except for us!

I feel betrayed and resentful toward our son. His insistence to go along with what felt like a "secret audition" at the request of her parents was condescending and disrespectful.

They are now engaged, and I've never said a word about this to him, but I continue to have lingering

resentment.

What do you think?
— Irritated Future
In-Laws

Dear Irritated: Your son seems to have handled this whole situation badly. My theory is that his fiancee is driving the wedding train. Your son is a passenger, and you and your wife are standing on the platform, watching it slowly pull away from the station.

He seems to be trying to hew to an old tradition, where the man approaches the woman's father, "asking for her hand." This is why her parents knew about this before you did.

This tradition leaves out the groom's parents. You will discover that many wedding traditions seem to be bride-centered.

This is why couples should reframe these traditions to be inclusive.

Dear Amy: "Guilty" described her desire to go on a cruise with her husband, but both of them were afraid of how her sister, a widow, would react.

I was deeply offended when you described this sister as "an emotional vampire," just because she wants to be included.

— Upset

Dear Upset: I described "Guilty's" sister that way, not because she wants to be included, but because she had this couple tied up in knots with fear about telling her that they wanted to have a vacation on their own.

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HOROSCOPES

Tarot.com

Aries (March 21-April 19):

Your ideas and thoughts can take you far right now.

Lots of things could be happening! Do your best to stay organized and remain true to your own vision, because people might be paying very close attention to what you have to say.

Taurus (April 20-May 20):

There's never been a better time to start looking for a new or better source of income. If your wallet is feeling light, start searching — a wonderful opportunity could be waiting for you! If you're happy with where you earn your paycheck, it might be time to discuss a raise.

Gemini (May 21-June 20):

Today's energy is focused on you. The stars shine brighter than ever, illuminating all the best parts of you for others to appreciate. If you've got any dreams sitting on the back burner, now would be a wonderful time to move them onto high heat. Some seeds you planted months ago might now be ready.

Cancer (June 21-July 22):

Take a look around your life, see what bad habits or issues are still lingering, and show them the door! You need to clear your plate before you can add something else, so don't hesitate to get rid of anything you no longer want. Better things are on the horizon.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22):

You have plenty of things to look forward to this evening.

Focus on your friends and at least plan a fun get-together. If you've lost touch with someone and want to rectify that, this is the perfect time to reach out. You'll have lots to talk about. Get out there and wish upon a star!

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):

You likely have every reason to be proud right now, Virgo! Take some time to celebrate your accomplishments! A project you've been hammering away at could finally reach an ending point, so look for opportunities to make your big presentation. There's a road opening up.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 22):

It's never too late to try and change up your usual routine for something a little more exciting — that there's a whole world out there waiting for you to come and explore it. Leaving your home may not be an option, but you can — and should — still explore new knowledge from home.

Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 21):

Chances are you've heard about a fabled pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. You might not even have to follow a rainbow to reach it. Instead of searching for a path, allow the universe to guide you toward the place you need to be in order to obtain a wonderful reward.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):

People could play an important role in your life impacting everything from romance to business to friendships. You and a particular peer might decide to get to know one another better, or you might decide that it's time to go your own way. Read the fine print.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): It's time to get your life in order! Whether or not you've let things fall to the wayside, it would be wise to take a moment to remember any resolutions you made at the start of the year and make sure that you're still on track. Become the best version of yourself.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): You've got permission to put yourself front and center! Try and turn your positivity into a group effort — or at least keep some altruistic urges in mind when making plans.

How can you help yourself and help others at the same time? It can get a little lonely out there in center stage.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20):

Your attention is drawn in the direction of your home and family by the stars themselves. It's a wonderful time to change up your space! Whatever happens, it's nearly guaranteed to occur under your own roof. This encourages healing as well, making any necessary work easier than normal.

TODAY IN HISTORY

Associated Press

On Dec. 18, 1787, New Jersey became the third state to ratify the U.S. Constitution.

In 1865, the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, abolishing slavery, was

declared in effect by Secretary of State William H. Seward.

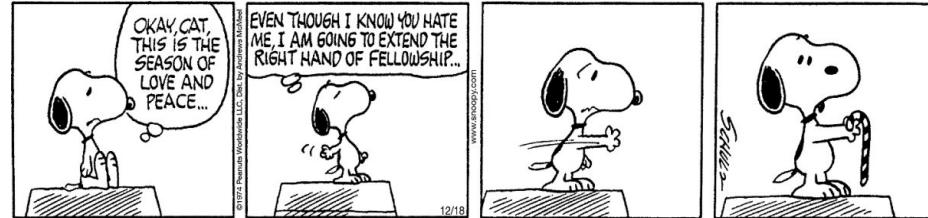
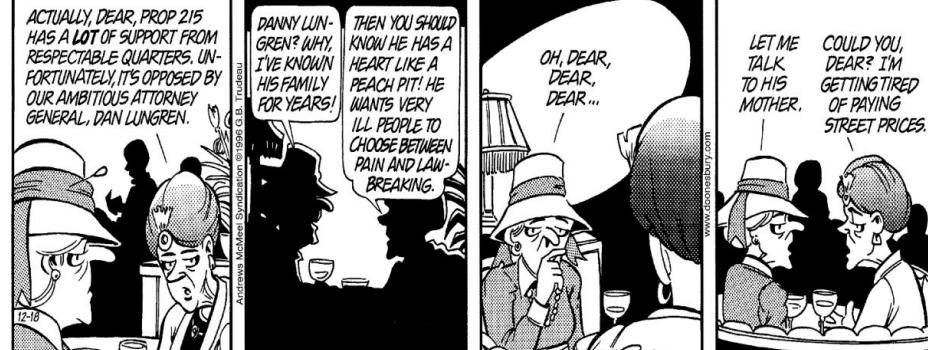
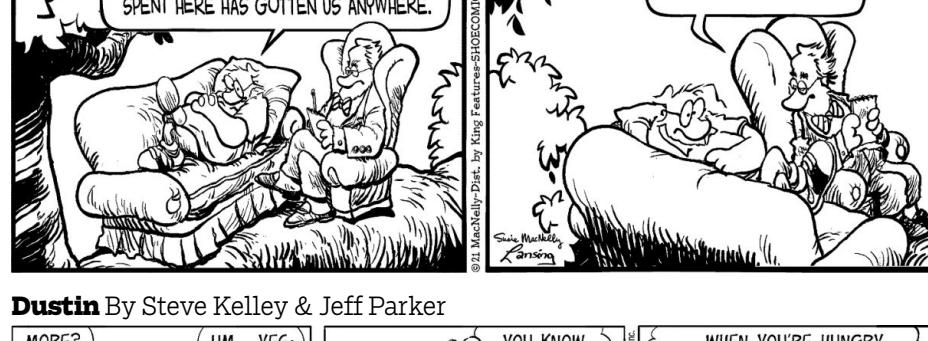
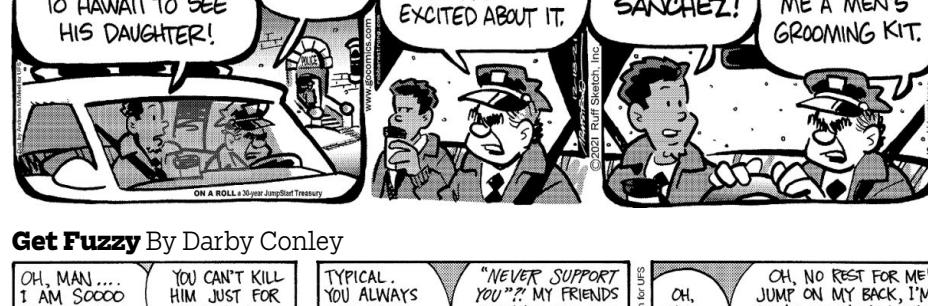
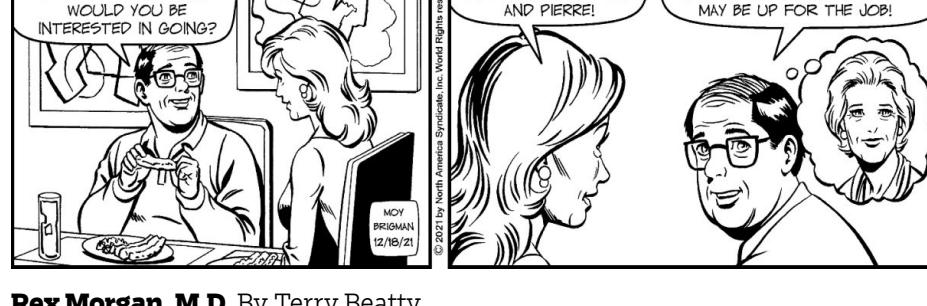
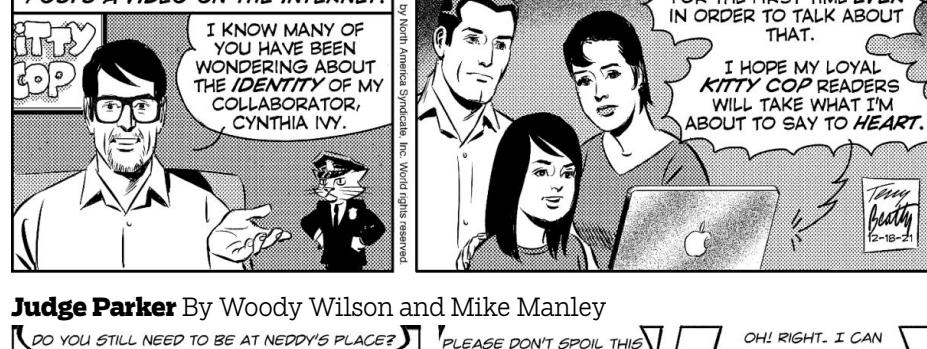
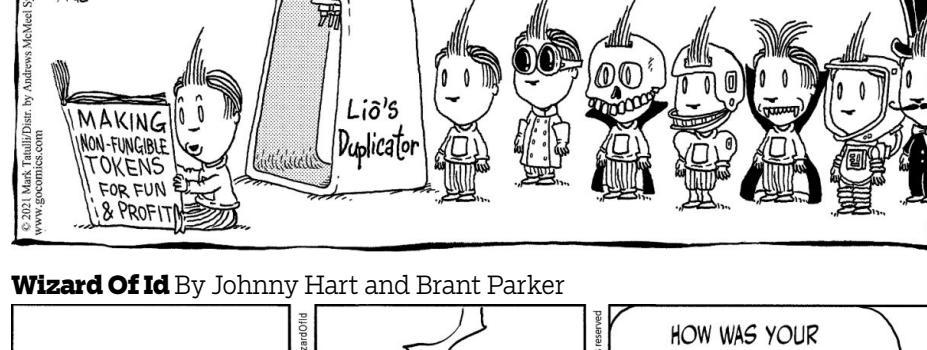
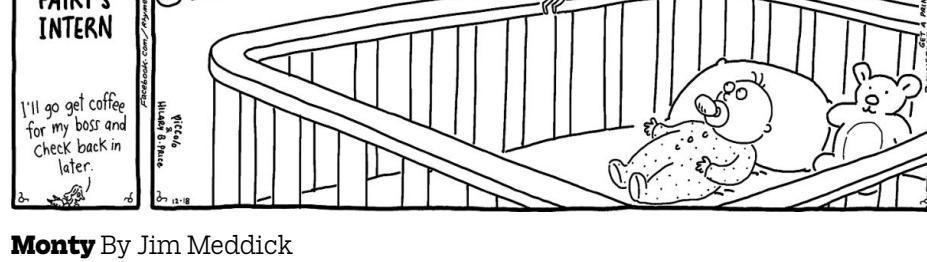
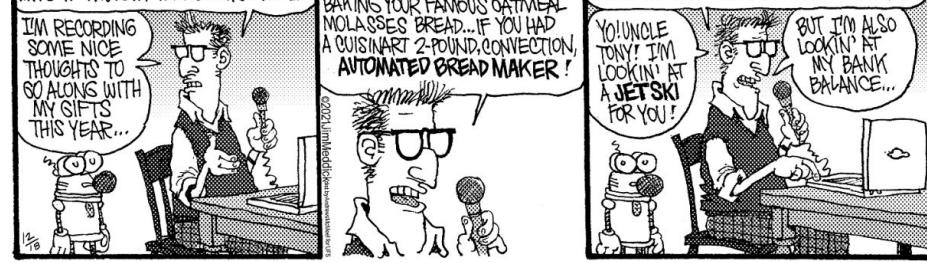
In 1892, Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky's ballet "The Nutcracker" publicly premiered in St. Petersburg, Russia; although now considered a classic, it received a generally negative reception from critics.

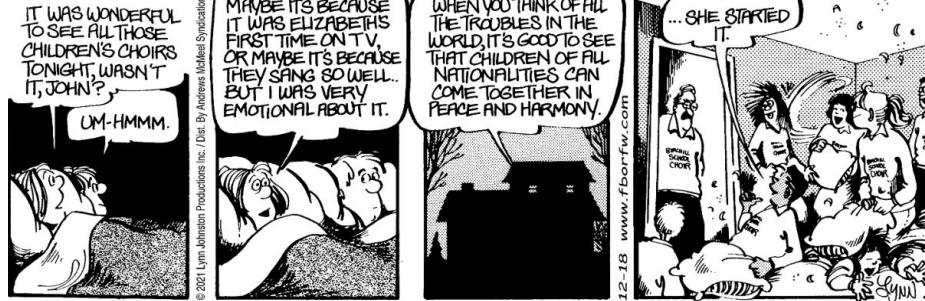
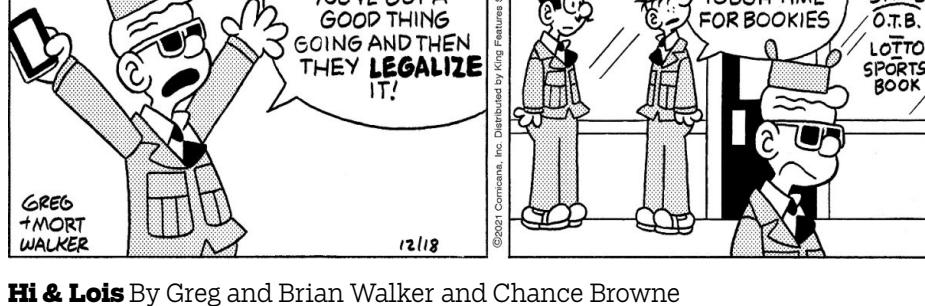
In 1917, Congress passed the 18th Amendment to

the U.S. Constitution, prohibiting "the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors," and sent it to the states for ratification.

In 1956, Japan was admitted to the United Nations.

In 1919, the U.S. House impeached President Donald Trump on two charges. (The trial ended in acquittal by the Senate.)

Peanuts By Charles M. Schulz**Classic Doonesbury** By Garry Trudeau**Garfield** By Jim Davis**Shoe** By Gary Brookins & Susie MacNelly**Dustin** By Steve Kelley & Jeff Parker**Pearls Before Swine** By Stephan Pastis**Mutts** By Patrick McDonnell**Arctic Circle** By Alex Hallatt**Jump Start** By Robb Armstrong**Get Fuzzy** By Darby Conley**Blondie** By Dean Young and John Marshall**Dilbert** By Scott Adams**Gil Thorp** By Neal Rubin and Frank McLaughlin**Mary Worth** By Karen Moy and June Brigman**Rex Morgan, M.D.** By Terry Beatty**Judge Parker** By Woody Wilson and Mike Manley**Baldo** By Cantu and Castellanos**Funky Winkerbean** By Tom Batiuk**Lio** By Mark Tatulli**Wizard Of Id** By Johnny Hart and Brant Parker**Rhymes With Orange** By Hilary Price**Monty** By Jim Meddick

For Better Or For Worse By Lynn Johnston**B.C.** By Hart**Beetle Bailey** by Mort, Greg & Brian Walker**Hi & Lois** By Greg and Brian Walker and Chance Browne**Hagar The Horrible** By Chris Browne**Non Sequitur** By Wiley Miller**Curtis** By Ray Billingsley**Pickles** By Brian Crane**Zits** By Jerry Scott and Jim Borgman**Rose Is Rose** By Pat Brady and Don Wimmer**Mother Goose And Grimm** By Mike Peters**CROSSWORD**

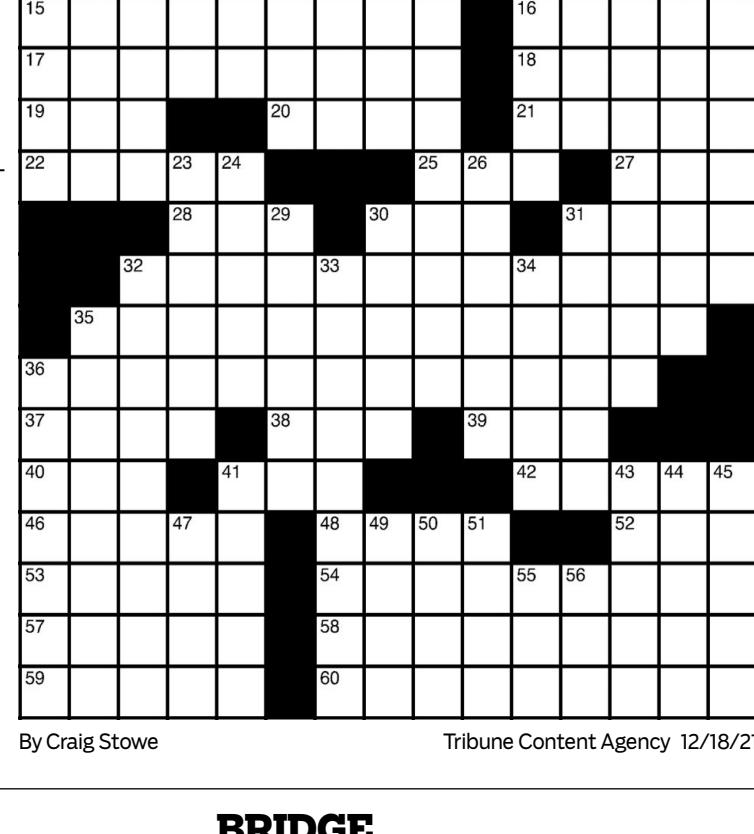
EDITED BY RICH NORRIS AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWIS

Across

1 Some assembly stations
10 Conceals, in a way
11 Adidas rival
12 What most novels are written in
13 Round item in a square box
14 Charlie Parker, at times
23 Isn't subtle, in a way
24 Jeremiads
25 "Nice work!"
26 "Then what?"
27 Chi preceder
28 Family nicknames
29 Curator's concerns
30 Bike shop array
31 Least amt.
32 Gym sets
33 "No worries"
34 Stop digressing
35 Shipping rope
36 Words often embroidered
37 "Love & Basketball" actor Omar
38 All Saints'—
39 Bonobo, for one
40 First animal in the Chinese zodiac
41 #34
42 Diminish slowly
43 Toot
44 Latin for "scraped," in a phrase
45 Pasture sound
46 Get around
47 Metaphor for doing more

Down

1 Two after pi
2 Get around
3 Sierra __
4 "Then what?"
5 Soirees
6 Parts of drills
7 Musical collaboration instruction
8 Calls on a field
9 Insurance metaphor
10 Conceals, in a way
11 Adidas rival
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By Craig Stowe

Tribune Content Agency 12/18/21

BRIDGE

BY STEVE BECKER

North dealer.
Neither side vulnerable.NORTH
♠ K 7 3
♥ Q 9 6
♦ A K 7
♣ 9 6 5 4WEST
♠ Q 10 6 4
♥ 7 3
♦ 9 4 3
♣ A K J 10EAST
♠ J 9 8
♥ 5 4 2
♦ Q J 8 5
♣ Q 8 2SOUTH
♠ A 5 2
♥ A K J 10 8
♦ 10 6 2
♣ 7 3The bidding:
North East South West
Pass Pass 1 ♥ Pass
2 NT Pass 3 ♥ Pass
4 ♥

Opening lead — king of clubs.

Try the impossible

This deal, played many years ago in a tournament, provides an excellent example of proper squeeze technique. South reached four hearts as shown.

Three notrump would have been much easier — nine tricks were available off the top.

It appears declarer must lose four tricks — two clubs, a spade and a diamond — but South found the solution. West started with the K-A-J of clubs, East playing the queen on the third round.

South recognized that his only chance was to engineer a squeeze. Since squeezes seldom work unless declarer has only one loser remaining, South discarded a spade on the queen of clubs.

East shifted to a spade, taken by declarer with the ace.

South then cashed the A-Q of hearts and A-K of diamonds before playing two more trumps to reach this position:

North

[S] K 7

[C] 9

West

[S] Q 10

[D] Q

South

[S] 5

[H] 10

[D] 10

When declarer cashed the ten of hearts, the defenders were caught in a double squeeze.

West could not spare the ten of clubs, so he had to discard a spade.

JUMBLE

BY DAVID HOYT AND JEFF KNUREK

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

KEISR

HOYAO

SOLONE

PRETIM

Get the free [Jumble app](#). Follow us on Twitter: @PlayJumble

HE THOUGHT HE COULD PICK UP THE HEAVY BOX BY HIMSELF BUT WAS ---

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers Monday)

Yesterday's Jumbles: ICING WAIVE PIGLET NOTION

Answer: The twins usually knew what each other was thinking because they were — "IN-TWO-ITIVE"

TODAY'S SUDOKU

9	5	8		7
7		4		3
3	1	7	2	
	8		7	
3				1
			7	5
9		8		4
4		1	9	6

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS CROSSWORD PUZZLEComplete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit, 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit [www.sudoku.org.uk](#).**ANSWER TO PREVIOUS CROSSWORD PUZZLE**MADISON START
ECOCIDE AERIE
HIGHGEAR TRASH
BINARYNUMBERS
ALAN SAO
DINGBAT ENDRUNS
SEE IRES APIA
LOCALRAGS
ALBA YORE CAT
CALYPSO BETRAYS
DBA HERO EPEE
COMMONTHREADS
REINS MILKDUDS
EMCEE FLAILED
DEEDS FASTENS**ANSWER TO PREVIOUS CROSSWORD PUZZLE**2 6 1 4 8 5 7 3 9
4 5 3 9 2 7 8 6 1
7 8 9 3 1 6 5 4 2
5 3 6 8 4 9 2 1 7
8 7 4 1 6 2 3 9 5
6 9 5 2 3 4 1 7 8
1 4 7 6 5 8 9 2 3
3 2 8 7 9 1 6 5 4**ANSWER TO PREVIOUS CROSSWORD PUZZLE**MADISON START
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Motoring
Inside

Hartford Courant

SPORTS

COURANT.COM/SPORTS

UCONN WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Team embraces challenge of shorthanded reality

By Alexa Philippou

Hartford Courant

Playing a top-10 team in the nation any time of year is tough as it is, but for the No. 7 UConn women's basketball team, Sunday's matchup against No. 6 Louisville certainly isn't coming at the best time.

The Huskies are down to eight healthy players with sophomore Paige Bueckers (knee), sophomore Nika Mühl (foot), freshman Azzi Fudd (foot) and junior Aubrey Griffin (back) still out, and sophomore Mir McLean joining freshman

Saylor Poffenbarger as mid-season transfers from the program. While Griffin has been out all season and Fudd hasn't played since the Battle 4 Atlantis Tournament, losing the team's true point guards in Bueckers and Mühl at the same time has made for a tough go the last two games: In their loss to then-unranked Georgia Tech, the Huskies looked out of sorts offensively, though they finally found a groove a quarter and a half into their UCLA win.

Louisville, with a pressure defense that will test the Huskies' inconsistent offense, offers the

toughest challenge UConn has faced in this shorthanded stretch. But even without the reigning national player of the year and three other key pieces, the Huskies aren't backing down.

"We just have to figure it out. We can't feel sorry for ourselves. No one else is feeling sorry for us," redshirt senior Evina Westbrook said Friday. "Lucky for us, no one expects us to win anymore. Even though we're still UConn, it's like, 'OK, this is going to be easy game for us.' Everyone wants a piece of us now. And we like that. I think we like that little edge, like, 'OK,

Up next

UConn vs. Louisville
(at Mohegan Sun)

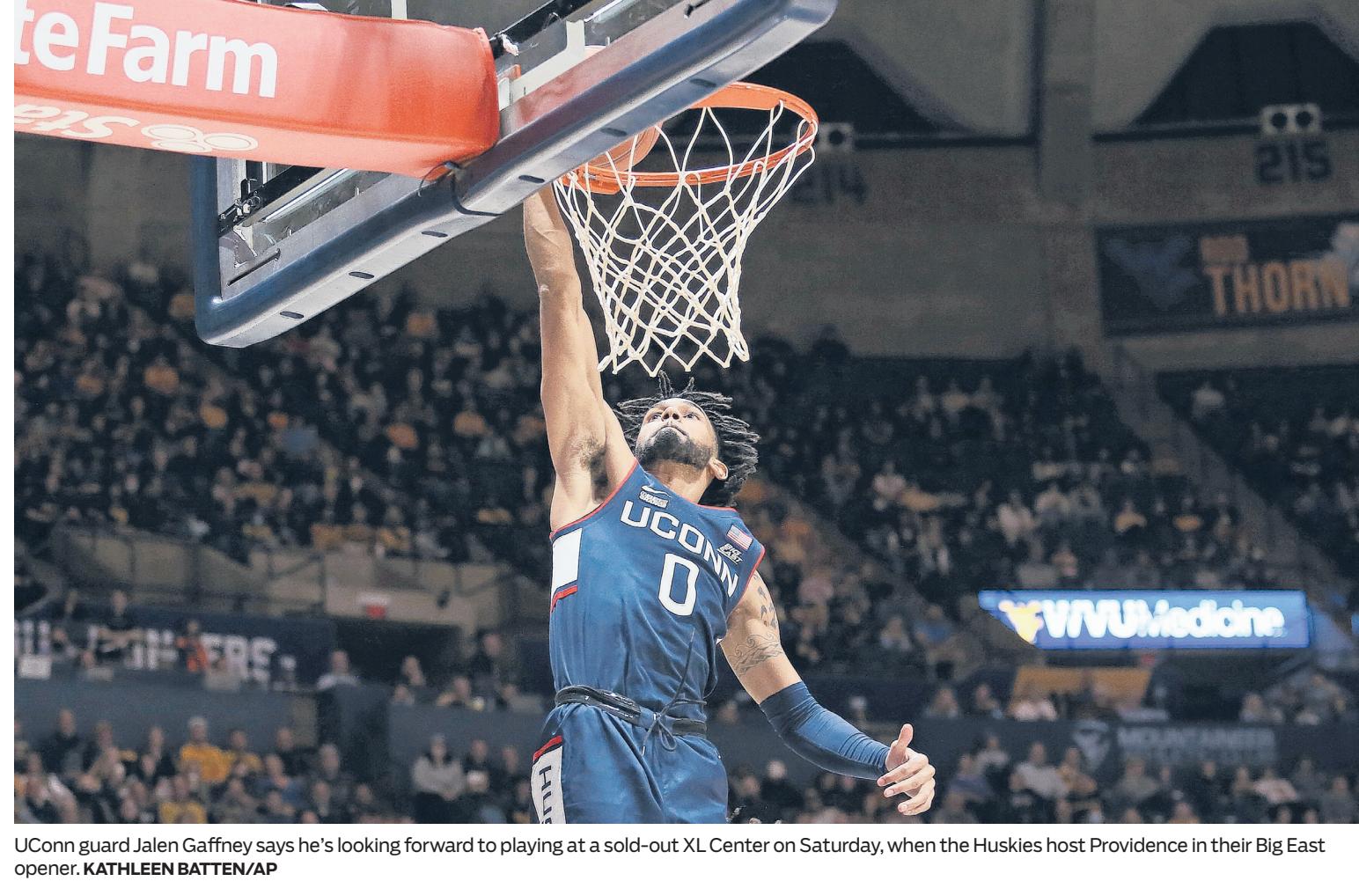
3:30 p.m. Sun., ESPN

Huskies to pull within two by the break after trailing by as many as 11. They then really kicked things into high gear in the second half.

"I think we just found our sense of offensive rhythm," Westbrook said. "For it to happen in the second half was huge. We've always kind of had a drop in the fourth quarter, and that's been a big emphasis at the end of practice, like we can't just drop off our energy. So for us to get a rhythm, get a flow going into the second half was great, and I think it gave us the energy that we

Turn to UConn, Page 4

UCONN MEN'S BASKETBALL



UConn guard Jalen Gaffney says he's looking forward to playing at a sold-out XL Center on Saturday, when the Huskies host Providence in their Big East opener. KATHLEEN BATTEN/AP

ON THE MEND

Martin, Sanogo are making their way back as Huskies prepare to open Big East play against Providence

By Shreyas Laddha

Hartford Courant

Two Big East rivals face off in the conference opener when No. 20 UConn (9-2) takes on Providence (10-1) on Saturday night at the XL Center.

According to UConn men's basketball coach Dan Hurley, sophomore forward Adama Sanogo (abdominal strain) and senior guard Tyrese Martin (wrist) might come back on Saturday. Martin seems further along between the two players.

Sanogo and Martin have missed the last three and four games, respectively, and UConn has gone

2-1 without both of them.

"[Martin] has a great chance as long as he doesn't have setback today," Hurley said Friday.

Hurley isn't sure if Martin will have a minutes restriction. Meanwhile, Sanogo has progressed to doing more on-court work.

"[Sanogo] desperately wants to be out there," Hurley said. "Let's see how he feels when he does a lot more today. He could give us some spot minutes."

UConn players and coaches alike are excited to play in front of a packed crowd against a Big East foe again.

"It's honestly going to be crazy. We have not played in front of a sold out

crowd in the XL Center in a while," said junior guard Jalen Gaffney.

Hurley praised this Friars team, which is unranked but received 57 votes in the latest AP Top 25 poll on Dec. 13.

"They should be ranked, based on what they've done to this point," he said.

The goal for UConn will be to match the tough, physical play that this experienced Providence team plays with.

"It's going to be a war on the glass as the coaches say," Gaffney said. "It's going to be a really tough game for us."

Here's everything you need to know about Saturday's matchup:

The basics

No. 20 UConn vs. Providence

Time/TV: 5 p.m., Saturday, FOX

Place: XL Center

Series: UConn leads 45-29

Last meeting: UConn won, 73-61,

on Feb. 16, 2021, at Gampel Pavilion

Live Stream: Fox Sports

Radio: UConn Sports Network

(Mike Crispino, Wayne Norman).

Sirius-136. XM-201 SXM-app-964.

97.9-ESPN Hartford. WILI-1400-AM

(Willimantic). WATR-1320-AM

(Waterbury). WAVZ-1300-AM

(New Haven). WGCH-1490-AM

(Greenwich).

Turn to Huskies, Page 4

UCONN MEN'S SOCCER

Gbandi, Huskies All-American, named new coach

By Dom Amore

Hartford Courant

Chris Gbandi, a three-time All-American at UConn and a member of the 2000 national championship team, will take over the men's soccer program at his alma mater.

Gbandi, 42, replaces Ray Reid, who announced his retirement

Dec. 2. After his playing career, Gbandi coached at UConn, Holy Cross and Dartmouth, then became Northeastern's head coach in 2016 and led the team to an 11-6-2 record in 2021 before a loss in the Colonial Athletic Association tournament.

As a player at UConn, Gbandi scored the first goal in UConn's 2-0 win over Creighton in the national

championship game on Dec. 10, 2000. That same day, he won the Hermann Trophy as best player in college soccer.

"Chris Gbandi is one of the finest players in the history of our soccer program," UConn director of athletics David Benedict said in a statement. "But that ability pales in

Turn to Soccer, Page 4



UConn coach Ray Reid, left, celebrates with Chris Gbandi after the Huskies won the NCAA championship in men's soccer in 2000. On Friday, Gbandi was named UConn's head coach, replacing Reid, who is retiring. AP FILE

"She's a bucket getter," Newington coach Marc Tancredi said. "She knows how to score on all three levels. She

Turn to Newington, Page 2

Inside

High school results, schedules.

Page 8

Did you know?

It is an established fact that high intensity headlights cause significant vision issues for oncoming older drivers.

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SPORTS

UP NEXT

Patriots: at Colts, Saturday, 8:15 p.m.
Giants: Cowboys, Sunday, 1 p.m.
Jets: at Dolphins, Sunday, 1 p.m.
UConn MBB: Providence (XL), Saturday, 5 p.m.; at Marquette, Tuesday, 9 p.m.; at Xavier, Dec. 28, 7 p.m.
UConn WBB: Basketball HoF Women's Showcase: vs. Louisville (Mohegan Sun), Sunday, 3:30 p.m.; Marquette (XL), Dec. 29, 7 p.m.; at DePaul, Dec. 31, 2 p.m.
Celtics: Knicks, Saturday, 7 p.m.; 76ers, Monday, 7:30 p.m.; Cavaliers, Wednesday, 7:30 p.m.
Knicks: at Celtics, Saturday, 7 p.m.; Pistons, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.; Wizards, Thursday, 7:30 p.m.
Nets: Magic, Saturday, 7:30 p.m.; Nuggets, Sunday, 7:30 p.m.; Wizards, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.
UConn hockey: at Harvard, Jan. 2, 7 p.m.; at Boston Coll., Jan. 8, 4 p.m.; Boston Univ., Jan. 14, 7 p.m.
Bruins: at Canadiens, Saturday, 7 p.m.; at Senators, Sunday, 5 p.m.; Hurricanes, Tuesday, 7 p.m.
Rangers: Canadiens, Wednesday, 7 p.m.; Red Wings, Dec. 27, 7 p.m.; at Panthers, Dec. 29, 7 p.m.
Wolf Pack: at Springfield, Saturday, 7 p.m.; Springfield, Sunday, 3 p.m.; Bridgeport, Wednesday, 7 p.m.

TV/RADIO

BASKETBALL

Noon: Butler at Purdue. (Live) FOX
Noon: Tennessee at Memphis. (Live) ESPN2
Noon: Pittsburgh at St. John's. (Live) FS1
1 p.m.: Gonzaga at Texas Tech. (Live) CBS
1 p.m.: N.C. Central at Hampton. (Live) TNT
2 p.m.: FDU at Virginia. (Live) ACC
2 p.m.: TCU at Georgetown. (Live) FS1
2:30 p.m.: Indiana at Notre Dame. (Live) FOX
2:30 p.m.: Austin Peay at Vanderbilt. (Live) SEC
2:30 p.m.: Louisville at Western Kentucky. (Live) CBSSN
3 p.m.: UCLA at North Carolina. (Live) CBS
4 p.m.: Cleveland State at Duke. (Live) ACC
4 p.m.: Marquette at Xavier. (Live) FS1
4 p.m.: Legacy Classic Howard at N.C. A&T. (Live) TNT
4:30 p.m.: Utah at Missouri. (Live) SEC
5 p.m.: Providence at UConn. (Live) FOX
5 p.m.: West Virginia at UAB. (Live) CBSSN
5:15 p.m.: Women's Stanford at Tennessee. (Live) ESPN2
5:30 p.m.: Ohio State at Kentucky. (Live) CBS
6 p.m.: Lehigh at Syracuse. (Live) ACC
6:30 p.m.: Dayton at Ole Miss. (Live) SEC
7 p.m.: LSU at Louisiana Tech. (Live) CBSSN
7 p.m.: Oklahoma State at Houston. (Live) ESPNU
7 p.m.: Knicks at Celtics. (Live) NBCSB, MSG, NBA
7:30 p.m.: Magic at Nets. (Live) YES
8 p.m.: South Carolina at Clemson. (Live) ACC
8:30 p.m.: Jacksonville State at Alabama. (Live) SEC
9 p.m.: Auburn at St. Louis. (Live) CBSSN
10 p.m.: Baylor at Oregon. (Live) ESPN2
11 p.m.: Loyola Marymount at Nevada. (Live) CBSSN

BOXING

6 p.m.: PBC Fight Night: Hitchins vs. Hawkins. (Live) FS1
8 p.m.: PBC Fight Night: David Morrell Jr. vs. Alantez Fox. (Live) FOX

FOOTBALL

11 a.m.: Boca Raton Bowl Western Kentucky vs. Appalachian State. (Live) ESPN
Noon: Celebration Bowl South Carolina State vs. Jackson State. (Live) ABC

2 p.m.: FCS Division I South Dakota State at Montana State. (Live) ESPN2
2:15 p.m.: New Mexico Bowl Texas-El Paso vs. Fresno State. (Live) ESPN

3:30 p.m.: Independence Bowl UAB vs. BYU. (Live) ABC
5:45 p.m.: LendingTree Bowl Eastern Michigan vs. Liberty. (Live) ESPN

7:30 p.m.: Jimmy Kimmel LA Bowl Utah State vs. Oregon State. (Live) ABC

8:15 p.m.: Patriots at Colts. (Live) NFL

9 p.m.: NCAA Division II Championship Valdosta State vs. Ferris State. (Live) ESPNU

9:15 p.m.: New Orleans Bowl Louisiana vs. Marshall. (Live) ESPN

GOLF

1:30 p.m.: PNC Championship, Day 1. (Live) GOLF

2:30 p.m.: PNC Championship, Day 1. (Live) NBC

HOCKEY

2 p.m.: Panthers at Wild. (Live) NHL

7 p.m.: Bruins at Canadiens. (Live) NESN, NHL

7 p.m.: Hartford Wolf Pack at Springfield Thunderbirds. (Live), Radio: 1410

SOCCER

8 a.m.: Italian Serie B Como vs. Reggina Calcio. (Live) FSP

9 a.m.: Italian Serie A Atalanta vs. AS Roma. (Live) CBSSN

10 a.m.: Spanish Primera Division Real Sociedad vs. Villarreal. (Live) ESPN2

10 a.m.: FIFA Arab Cup Final. (Live) FS1

Noon: Italian Serie A Bologna vs. Juventus. (Live) CBSSN

12:30 p.m.: Premier League Leeds United vs. Arsenal. (Live) NBC

8 p.m.: International Friendly USA vs. Bosnia and Herzegovina. (Live) FS1

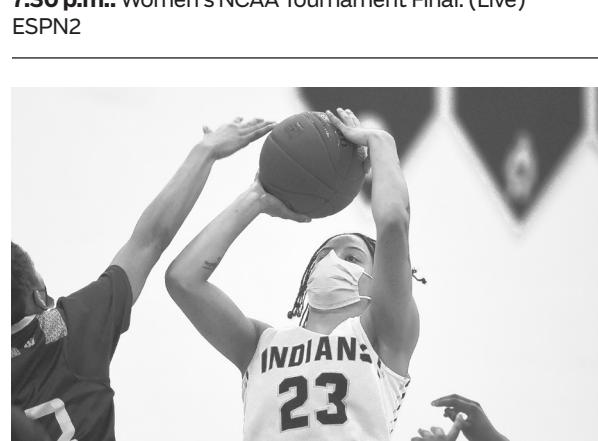
TENNIS

6 a.m.: ATP Mubadala 3rd Place & Final, Maia 2-ATP Challenger Semifinals & Doubles Final. (Live) TENNIS

2 p.m.: Rio de Janeiro-ATP Challenger, Semifinals & Doubles Final. (Live) TENNIS

VOLLEYBALL

7:30 p.m.: Women's NCAA Tournament Final. (Live) ESPN2



Newington's Lilly Ferguson, shown here playing against Windsor last season in the CCC Tournament championship, scored 20 points Friday night in a 54-41 victory over E.O. Smith in Storrs. COURANT FILE

Newington

from Page 1

kind of seamlessly works within our offense on our team."

Last year, the Panthers' season ended when COVID-19 issues forced the team to forfeit its first-round CCC Tournament game against Windsor. Windsor ended up going

to the final, where the Warriors lost to Newington.

So E.O. Smith was looking forward to Friday's game, but it didn't exactly turn out the way the Panthers wanted.

"My team really impressed me," Tancredi said. "E.O. Smith's a very challenging opponent, and we just executed the way we wanted to."



Warriors guard Stephen Curry reacts after hitting a 3-point shot over Celtics guard Jaylen Brown (7) on Friday night in Boston.

MARY SCHWALM/AP

CELTICS

Five Celtics get placed in health and safety protocols

By Mark Murphy
 Boston Herald

With the omicron variant of COVID-19 on the rise across the world, it's not a surprise that the Celtics were hit by their most widespread coronavirus-related absences of the season Friday night.

Five Celtics — Al Horford, Grant Williams, Jabari Parker, Juancho Hernangomez and Sam Hauser — were placed in health and safety protocols following testing during the morning shoot-around, and thus missed Friday night's game against Golden State. In addition, Dennis Schroder missed the game with a non-COVID-19 illness.

It was Horford's second time this season in the protocols.

As a result, coach Ime Udoka started Jayson Tatum, Jaylen Brown, Marcus Smart, Robert Williams and Romeo Langford, and planned to go even smaller than usual against the best small-ball lineup in the NBA.

"I wouldn't say frustrating. It's something everybody is playing through," said the Celtics coach. "You've seen Chicago and Brooklyn and other teams hit with that. It's something we've been trying to avoid, but it seems inevitable at times for everybody. You have to tinker with the lineups at times, but we have other guys who are able, and we'll increase those minutes. Nothing else you can do. We have 11 healthy bodies."

Chicago set a record, and had two games postponed, after placing 10 players in protocol earlier this week.

Josh Richardson returned to the Celtics lineup against Golden State after missing the previous two games while in health and safety protocols.

Overall seven players, at different times, have missed time to COVID-19 protocols, including Brown early in training camp.

The league has tightened restrictions regarding testing and mask wearing, and none too soon.

"Just being more diligent," said Udoka. "Our surroundings and the mask wearing is a big thing, who you're with outside of the building off the court, and that's pretty much it. We're trying to follow the protocols of the league and be more strict with what we're doing. We're impacted. It's hit us like the rest of the league —

something we've all had to adapt to and adjust to. It is what it is. We have healthy bodies and other guys get opportunities."

Udoka disagreed, however, that the league got too comfortable, allowing arenas to return to full capacity.

"Other than the fans coming back, it's been pretty normal in the building and with what we've done," he said. "For vaccinated and unvaccinated players we have some stricter rules. Other than the fans I think we've been pretty similar with the testing and mask wearing and strict rules we have. Omicron is a different thing that doesn't have to do with fans in the building. It's a new variant that's come along and has affected people differently."

GOLDEN KNIGHTS 3, RANGERS 2 (SO)

Rangers can't hold onto lead, fall in shootout

By Colin Stephenson
 Newsday

NEW YORK — Jonathan Marchessault's goal in the third round of the shootout was the only score of the tiebreaker Friday as the visiting Vegas Golden Knights beat their old coach, Gerard Gallant, and the Rangers, 3-2 in Madison Square Garden.

The Rangers were playing without leading scorer Artemi Panarin, who suffered a lower body injury in Wednesday's game against the Arizona Coyotes, but they took a 2-1 lead into the third period, on goals by Mika Zibanejad and Chris Kreider, before Dylan Coghlan's goal at 14:44 of the third period tied it, 2-2, to force overtime. The teams traded chances in the five-minute extra session, but neither managed to score in the three-on-three session.

The game closed out a stretch for the Rangers that saw them play 10 games over 17 days. They went 6-3-1 over that stretch, to improve their record to 19-7-4. Now, they are off until Wednesday, and then they are off for the Christmas break after that.

Gallant insisted he had no bitterness toward the Golden Knights.

"Not now, no," he said at the Rangers' morning skate. "It's two years ago. No, you move on."

Gallant had guided the Golden Knights to the Stanley Cup finals in



Vegas Golden Knights center Chandler Stephenson controls the puck ahead of Rangers defenseman Adam Fox (23) in the second period Friday at Madison Square Garden in New York. MARY ALTAFFER/AP

2018, but the team lost in the first round of the playoffs the next year, and when it got off to a 24-19-6 record in his third season, Gallant was fired Jan. 15, 2020. He was replaced by Pete DeBoer, the former Devils coach who'd been fired by the San Jose Sharks a month or so earlier.

"They're a good team," Gallant said of the Golden Knights. "They had a ton of injuries early in the year, and a ton of guys missing, and they kept winning. And so, they're a real good hockey team. No doubt about that."

Gallant sent out his fourth line — featuring ex-Golden Knights enforcer

Ryan Reaves — for the game's opening faceoff. Reaves, who has said many times how he enjoyed his four years in Vegas, had nevertheless told reporters at the morning skate that he would be playing his hardest against his old club, and said, "I'll be looking for heads."

But as far as sticking it to one's old team, it was ex-Ranger Brett Howden who got the first laugh, scoring the game's first goal at 6:49 of the opening period, to give Vegas a 1-0 lead. Howden, who scored 16 goals in three seasons with the Rangers — one last season — whacked in his own rebound for his third goal of the season.

REGIONAL DIGEST

Conn. College men's soccer coaches named D-III staff of the year

Connecticut College men's soccer coach Reuben Burk and assistant Andrew Storton were named the NCAA Men's Division III National Coaching Staff of the Year by the United Soccer Coaches on Friday.

Led by Burk and Storton, the Camels completed their most successful season in school history by winning the Division III championship, the school's first team national championship in any sport.

In addition to reaching their fourth straight NCAA Tournament and making their first trip to the national semifinals, the Camels also won their first NESCAC regular season title, hosted the league's championship weekend for the first time, and advanced to the championship match of the NESCAC Tournament for the first time in program history. The team's 19 victories were a school record, bettering the previous mark of 14 set in 1978.

Burk and Storton will be presented the award at the United Soccer Coaches Annual Awards Banquet on Jan. 21 in Kansas City, Mo.

— Staff report

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EASTERN CONFERENCE					
ATLANTIC	W	L	PCT	GB	
Brooklyn	21	8	.724	—	
Boston	14	14	.500	6 1/2	
Philadelphia	15	15	.500	6 1/2	
Toronto	13	15	.464	7 1/2	
New York	13	16	.448	8	

SOUTHEAST					
W	L	PCT	GB		
Miami	18	12	.600	—	
Charlotte	16	14	.533	2	
Atlanta	14	14	.500	3	
Washington	15	15	.500	3	
Orlando	5	25	.167	13	

CENTRAL					
W	L	PCT	GB		
Milwaukee	19	11	.633	—	
Chicago	17	10	.630	1/2	
Cleveland	18	12	.600	1	
Indiana	13	18	.419	6 1/2	
Detroit	4	23	.148	13 1/2	

WESTERN CONFERENCE					
SW	W	L	PCT	GB	
Memphis	18	11	.621	—	
Dallas	14	14	.500	3 1/2	
San Antonio	10	17	.370	7	
Houston	9	20	.310	74	
New Orleans	9	21	.300	9 1/2	

NORTHWEST					
W	L	PCT	GB		
Utah	20	7	.741	—	
Denver	14	14	.500	6 1/2	
Minnesota	13	15	.464	7 1/2	
Portland	11	18	.379	10	
Oklahoma City	8	19	.296	12	

PACIFIC					
GP	W	L	PCT	GB	
Golden State	23	5	.821	—	
Phoenix	23	5	.821		
L.A. Clippers	16	13	.552	7 1/2	
L.A. Lakers	16	13	.552	7 1/2	
Sacramento	12	17	.414	11 1/2	

FRIDAY'S RESULTS

Miami 115, Orlando 105
Denver at Atlanta, late
Golden State at Boston, late
Milwaukee at New Orleans, late
San Antonio at Utah, late
Charlotte at Portland, late
L.A. Lakers at Minnesota, late
Memphis at Sacramento, late

SATURDAY'S GAMES

Houston at Detroit, 12p.m.
New York at Boston, 7p.m.
Golden State at Toronto, 7:30p.m.
Orlando at Brooklyn, 7:30p.m.
L.A. Clippers at Oklahoma City, 8p.m.
Cleveland at Milwaukee, 9p.m.
Washington at Utah, 9p.m.

SUNDAY'S GAMES

Miami at Detroit, 6p.m.
Portland at Memphis, 6p.m.
San Antonio at Sacramento, 6p.m.
Cleveland at Atlanta, 7:30p.m.
Denver at Brooklyn, 7:30p.m.
Charlotte at Phoenix, 8p.m.
Dallas at Minnesota, 8p.m.
L.A. Lakers at Chicago, 8p.m.
New Orleans at Philadelphia, 8p.m.

THURSDAY'S GAMES

Indiana 122, Detroit 113
Brooklyn 114, Philadelphia 105
New York 116, Houston 103
Phoenix 118, Washington 98
Chicago at Toronto, ppd

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

MEN'S AP TOP 25 FARED

No. 1 South Carolina (11-0) did not play. Next: at Oregon, Saturday.

No. 2 Duke (9-1) did not play. Next: vs. Loyola (Md.), Saturday.

No. 3 Purdue (9-1) did not play. Next: vs. Butler, Saturday.

No. 4 UCLA (9-1) did not play. Next: vs. North Carolina, Saturday.

No. 5 Gonzaga (8-2) did not play. Next: vs. No. 25 Texas Tech, Saturday.

No. 6 Alabama (8-2) did not play. Next: vs. Jacksonville St., Saturday.

No. 7 Kansas (8-1) did not play. Next: vs. Stephen F. Austin, Saturday.

No. 8 Arizona (10-0) did not play. Next: vs. Cal Baptist, Saturday.

No. 9 Villanova (7-3) at Creighton. Next: vs. No. 22 Xavier, Tuesday.

No. 10 Southern Cal (11-0) did not play. Next: vs. Georgia Tech, Saturday.

No. 11 Iowa St. (10-0) did not play. Next: vs. SE Louisiana, Sunday.

No. 12 Michigan St. (9-2) did not play. Next: at Oakland, Tuesday.

No. 13 Auburn (9-1) did not play. Next: at Saint Louis, Saturday.

No. 14 Houston (9-2) did not play. Next: vs. Oklahoma St., Saturday.

No. 15 Ohio St. (8-2) did not play. Next: vs. No. 21 Kentucky, Saturday.

No. 16 Seton Hall (9-1) did not play. Next: vs. Iona, Saturday.

No. 17 Texas (7-2) did not play. Next: vs. Stanford, Sunday.

No. 18 Tennessee (8-2) did not play. Next: vs. Memphis, Saturday.

No. 19 LSU (10-0) did not play. Next: vs. Louisiana Tech, Saturday.

No. 20 UConn (9-2) did not play. Next: vs. Providence, Saturday.

No. 21 Kentucky (7-2) did not play. Next: vs. No. 15 Ohio St., Saturday.

No. 22 Xavier (10-1) did not play. Next: vs. Marquette, Saturday.

No. 23 Colorado St. (10-0) did not play. Next: vs. Tulsa, Saturday.

No. 24 Arkansas (9-1) did not play. Next: vs. Hofstra, Saturday.

No. 25 Texas Tech (8-1) did not play. Next: vs. No. 5 Gonzaga, Saturday.

FRIDAY'S SCORES

Case Western 94, Kalamazoo 74
FAU 78, Florida Tech 55
Lycome 88, Kings (Pa.) 63
Lander 83, Columbus St. 71
Liberty 74, East Carolina 64
Richmond 83, NC State 74
Virginia Tech 80, St. Bonaventure 49

WOMEN'S AP TOP 25 FARED

No. 1 South Carolina (11-0) did not play. Next: vs. No. 3 Stanford, Tuesday.

No. 2 NC State (10-2) did not play. Next: vs. Virginia, Sunday.

No. 3 Stanford (7-2) did not play. Next: at No. 7 Tennessee, Saturday.

No. 4 Arizona (10-0) beat N. Arizona 82-55. Next: at No. 11 Texas, Sunday.

No. 5 Baylor (9-1) did not play. Next: vs. No. 13 Michigan, Sunday.

No. 6 Louisville (9-1) did not play. Next: at No. 7 UConn, Sunday.

No. 7 Tennessee (9-0) did not play. Next: vs. No. 3 Stanford, Saturday.

No. 7 UConn (6-2) did not play. Next: vs. No. 6 Louisville, Sunday.

No. 9 Maryland (9-3) did not play. Next: at Coppin St., Tuesday.

No. 10 Indiana (8-2) did not play. Next: vs. W. Michigan, Sunday.

No. 11 Texas (7-1) did not play. Next: vs. No. 4 Arizona, Sunday.

No. 12 Iowa St. (10-1) did not play. Next: vs. Prairie View, Sunday.

No. 13 Michigan (10-1) did not play. Next: vs. No. 5 Baylor, Sunday.

No. 14 Iowa (5-2) did not play. Next: vs. UCF, Saturday.

No. 15 Duke (8-1) did not play. Next: at Miami, Sunday.

No. 16 South Florida (7-3) vs. High Point. Next: vs. West Virginia, Sunday.

No. 17 Georgia Tech (8-2) did not play. Next: at St. Francis (Pa.), Sunday.

No. 18 Georgia Tech (8-2) did not play. Next: vs. Wake Forest, Sunday.

No. 19 Kentucky (6-3) did not play. Next: vs. S. Carolina Upstate, Sunday.

No. 20 BYU (8-1) did not play. Next: vs. Washington St., Saturday.

No. 21 Notre Dame (9-2) did not play. Next: vs. Pittsburgh, Sunday.

No. 22 LSU (8-1) did not play. Next: vs. New Orleans, Saturday.

No. 23 Texas A&M (9-2) did not play. Next: vs. Rice, Sunday.

No. 24 Ohio St. (8-2) did not play. Next: at UCLA, Sunday.

No. 25 North Carolina (9-0) did not play. Next: at Boston College, Sunday.

FRIDAY'S SCORES

Arizona 82, N. Arizona 55
Liberty 76, Grand Canyon 61
Memphis 56, Howard 50
Mississippi 73, Samford 48
Stetson 64, VCU 58
St. Peter's 68, Niagara 64

NHL

EASTERN CONFERENCE					
ATLANTIC	GP	W	L	PCT	PTS
Tampa Bay	29	19	6	.642	94
Toronto	30	8	2	.429	76
Florida	29	18	7	.404	87
Detroit	30	14	3	.313	81
Boston	26	14	2	.300	71
Buffalo	29	10	4	.242	80
Ottawa	27	9	17	.191	76
Montreal	31	7	21	.137	67

METROPOLITAN					
GP	W	L	PCT	PTS	GA
Carolina	28	20	7	.511	90
N.Y. Rangers	29	19	7	.411	84
Washington	29	7	5	.417	101
Pittsburgh	28	15	8	.355	85
Columbus	28	14	13	.129	91
Philadelphia	28	11	12	.111	92
New Jersey	28	10	13	.150	79

WESTERN CONFERENCE					
CENTRAL	GP	W	L	PCT	PTS

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MEN'S BASKETBALL
Saturday: vs. Providence, 5 p.m., at XL Center, FOX

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL
Sunday: vs. Louisville, 3:30 p.m., at Mohegan Sun, ESPN

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EQUALITY IN COLLEGE ATHLETICS

NCAA to pay officials same in both basketball tournaments

By Doug Feinberg
Associated Press

The NCAA will pay basketball officials for the women's tournament the same amount it pays the officials for the men's competition.

"The national office continues to prioritize gender equity and has taken steps to correct the disparity of pay for officials selected to work the Division I men's and women's basketball championships," the NCAA said in a statement released Friday. "All basketball officials, regardless of the gender of sport participants, will be receiving equal pay for championship games officiated in 2022 and beyond."

Gender equality in college basketball returned to the forefront last season after the NCAA failed to provide similar amenities to the teams in the men's and women's Division I tournaments.

The NCAA commissioned the Kaplan Hecker & Fink LLP law firm to create a gender equity report last summer. The firm issued a 113-page document that had a series of recommendations for changes in the women's tournament that included expanding the field to 68 teams and using the phrase "March Madness."



UConn coach Geno Auriemma and associate head coach Chris Dailey argue a call with a referee during a game in February 2020. Women's basketball officials will be paid the same as men's basketball officials in the NCAA Tournament beginning in 2022, the NCAA announced Friday. COURANT FILE

Officiating was not brought up at all in the report, but the NCAA noticed in budgeting meetings that the referees had a pay difference and decided to make a change.

"Happy the NCAA recognized that this was the right thing to do for NCAA Tournament officials," selection committee chairwoman Nina King said. "It was almost low-hanging fruit. Why aren't we paying the officials the same to do the same work on the men's tournament? Pretty easy

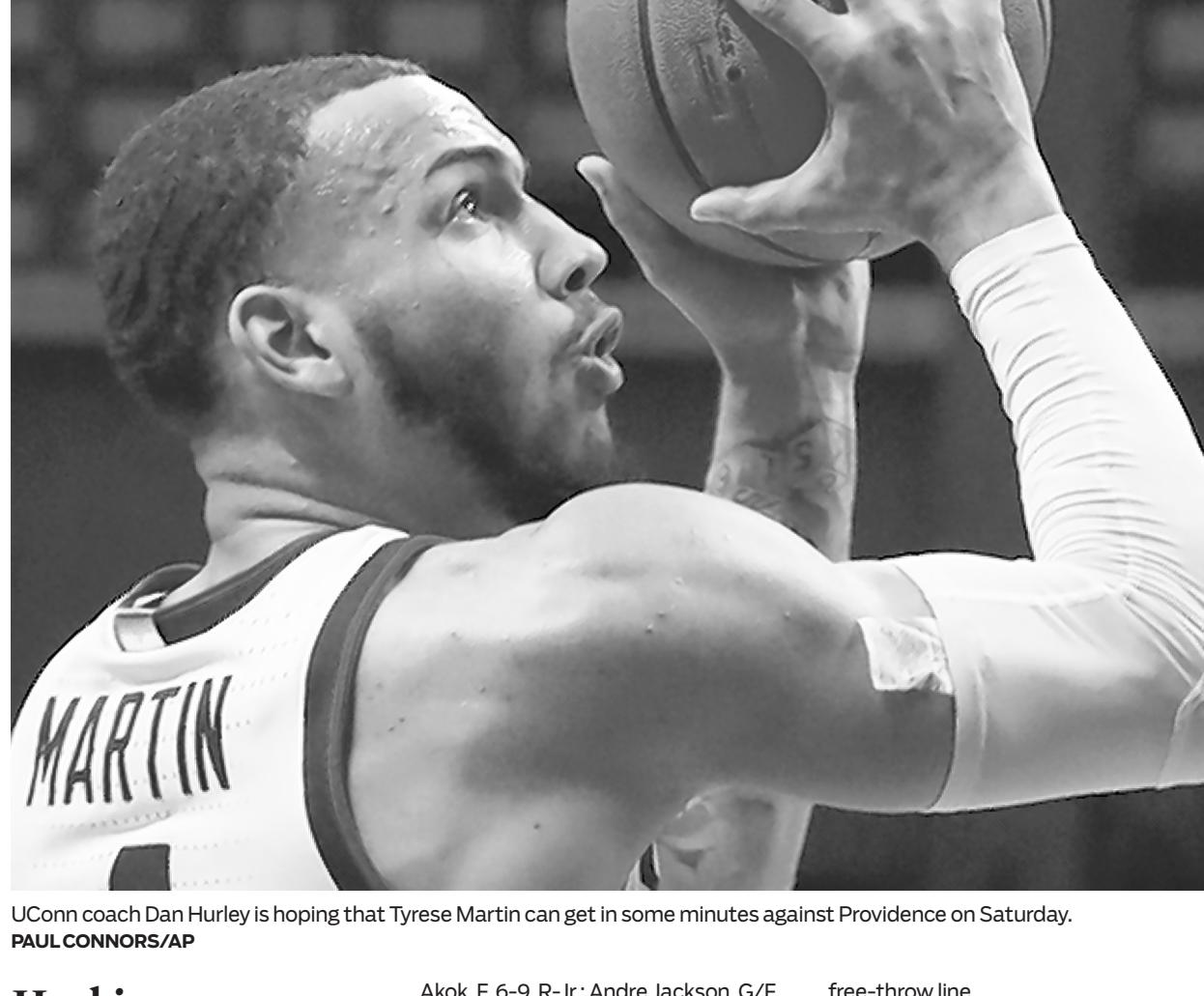
rationale to put forward. I'm really pleased that we got the approval to do that."

This isn't the first time that officials have made the same in the NCAA Tournament. From 2001-2012, the two tournaments paid the same, but as men's referees started making more in their conference games the NCAA had to increase the pay in the tournament to get the best officials, according to a person familiar with the situation. The person spoke on condition

of anonymity because they weren't allowed to speak publicly on the matter.

The pay for women's officials increased, but not nearly at the same rate as they make less in conference play. Unlike professional sports leagues, college officials are independent contractors.

The NCAA also said it will pay softball and lacrosse officials equitably as compared to their counterparts for men's games. The other 21 sports already had equitable pay.



UConn coach Dan Hurley is hoping that Tyrese Martin can get in some minutes against Providence on Saturday.
PAULCONNORS/AP

Huskies

from Page 1

Providence (10-1) probable starters, sixth man

Nate Watson, C, 6-10, GS; Al Durham, G, 6-4, GS; A.J. Reeves, G, 6-6, Sr.; Noah Horchler, F, 6-8, GS; Justin Minaya, F, 6-7, GS; Alyn Breed, G, 6-3, So.

No. 20 UConn (9-2) probable starters, sixth man

R.J. Cole, G, 6-1, GS; Isaiah Whaley, F, 6-9, GS; Jordan Hawkins, G, 6-5, Fr.; Akok

Akok, F, 6-9, R-Jr.; Andre Jackson, G/F, 6-6, So.; Jalen Gaffney, G, 6-3, Jr.

The matchup

UConn's offense: The Huskies must limit slow starts and make sure to push the pace against a slow Providence team. Don't be hesitant to take open shots.

Providence's defense: Dominating the rebound battle will be a key against a Providence team that loves second-chance opportunities.

Providence offense: Watson is the Friar's leading scorer, averaging 15.3 points per game. He's shooting a career-high 64.3% from the field.

Providence defense: Providence plays tough, physical defense, which UConn can take advantage of by getting to the

free-throw line.

UConn's key: The Huskies need to play good defense while matching Providence's physicality.

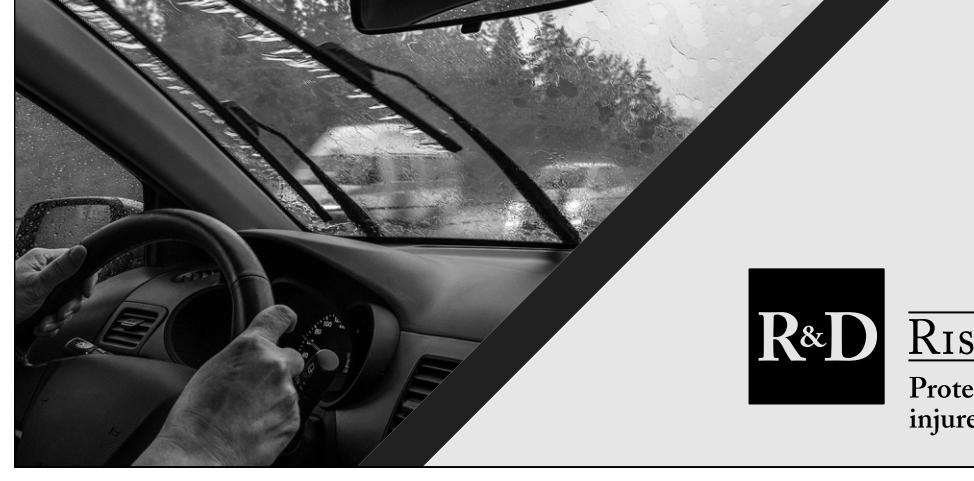
Player to watch: Cole. If Martin plays, Cole will have his offensive load lessened and should lead to his offense bouncing back after a rough shooting stretch in the last couple of games.

About Providence's coach: Ed Cooley is in his 10th year at Providence College and has an overall record of 204-136 with the Friars.

Providence mascot: The mascot is the Friar.

Providence famous alumni: NBA Hall of Famer Lenny Wilkens.

Shreyas Laddha can be reached at sladdha@courant.com.



Safety Tip of the Day

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and role model for our student-athletes. Winning is in his DNA, and we are extremely fortunate that he will be leading this program into the future. I cannot wait to watch his team play."

Gbandi was drafted in the first round of the 2002 MLS draft by the Dallas Burn and played professionally until 2010. He played in the 2006 World Cup qualifiers with the Liberian national team.

He was an assistant coach with Reid at UConn in 2011-12 and also coached at Holy Cross and Dartmouth. At Northeastern, his teams were 21-46-8 over his first five years, but he turned the program around in 2021.

"My family and I would like to thank David Benedict and the search committee for putting their trust in me to lead this legendary program," Gbandi said. "This is certainly a dream come true for me to be given the opportunity to return to my alma mater and to build upon the legacy that my mentor, Ray Reid, has established. UConn soccer has a rich history of success, and my goal is to recruit and develop the best student-athletes at a world class institution that will ultimately bring another national championship to Storrs."

Dom Amore can be reached at damore@courant.com.

tests this week to try to get to the bottom of what's going on (Auriemma said on the UConn Coaches Show this week that it isn't skeletal). She tried to practice for a day or two, but her back didn't respond well.

With Bueckers given an eight-week recovery timeline by the school following her surgery to repair a tibial plateau fracture and lateral meniscus tear, Auriemma was asked to clarify whether that figure reflects when she could actually return to game play.

"I don't know anything about anything," Auriemma said. "I'm not a doctor. I have no idea."

Napheesa Collier stops by

The Huskies had a special guest stop by practice: UConn great Napheesa Collier (2015-19), who just finished her third season with the Minnesota Lynx, was working with the scout team on Friday.

The reunion was all the more special for the Huskies given that Collier recently announced she is pregnant and expecting a daughter in May.

"I think Phees just wanted to break a sweat," Auriemma said. "You could see obviously that she has certain special qualities about her. The players were pretty impressed and pretty amazed that someone could do some of the things that she did given what state she's in. But I don't think there's anybody that has anything but an incredible amount of respect for Phees. And I think the kids were pretty pumped to see her."

Nelson-Ododa joked that she didn't know whether to box out Collier, but she was thrilled to see her former teammate nonetheless.

"That was great," Nelson-Ododa said. "I haven't seen her in like two years. So it's awesome for her to come back and just see her again and also I'm really happy for her because she's expecting, so that's awesome, too."

Alexa Philippou can be reached at aphilippou@courant.com.

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NATIONAL SPORTS REPORT

SHORTS

Chiefs begin chase for No. 1 seed



The about-face of the Chiefs from their 3-4 start to their seven-game winning streak can be traced to the abrupt turnaround of their defense, and that in turn can be traced to the arrival of defensive end Melvin Ingram. Turns out he's doing more than making tackles and pressuring the quarterback. It was Ingram who correctly called the pre-game coin flip against his former team Thursday night, then did the same at the beginning of overtime. That gave the Chiefs the ball, and Patrick Mahomes, pictured, and Travis Kelce did the rest, driving for the winning touchdown in a 34-26 victory over the Chargers that kept the Chiefs in first place in the AFC West. "It's kind of crazy. Until the moment has ended, you're just tunnelled in on the game plan," Chiefs coach Andy Reid said after the win. "Then when it's over, you go, 'Whoa!' If I could jump, I would jump with excitement." The Chiefs (10-4) are now a half-game ahead of the Patriots and Titans, both of whom play this weekend, for the best record in the AFC. Perhaps more importantly, they are up two games on the Chargers (8-6) in the division race.

Jets' Maurice resigns as coach



Jets coach Paul Maurice has resigned, saying his longtime team needs to hear a "new voice." The Jets announced Maurice's decision on Friday, and said it was effective immediately. Dave Lowry, an assistant under Maurice, agreed to serve as the interim coach for the rest of the season, general manager Kevin Cheveldayoff said. The Jets (13-10-5) had dropped three of four heading into Friday night's game against the visiting Capitals. It lost 4-2 to the lowly Sabres on Tuesday. "This isn't necessarily a bunch of negative things that stacked up on this," Maurice said. "This was, I've pushed as long and as hard as I can here. I love these guys. They need a new voice, and I know that." Maurice, who turns 55 on Jan. 30, coached Winnipeg into the playoffs in each of the previous four seasons. The Jets swept Edmonton in the first round in May and then were swept by Montreal in the next round. Maurice took over as Jets coach in January 2014. He coached exactly 600 regular-season games with the franchise, going 315-223-62. He signed a multiyear extension with the Jets in February 2020.

Woods makes his return to golf



Tiger Woods walked onto the tee for a routine pro-am round Friday and felt an unexpected dose of nerves, realizing how long it had been since he had an audience on the golf course. The small grandstand behind the tee was packed, everyone on their feet. Spectators filled every inch behind the ropes for 95 yards. This was another must-see moment involving Woods. Ten months after Woods shattered his right leg in a car crash in suburban Los Angeles, he was back to golf at the PNC Championship with 12-year-old son Charlie. Back to being Tiger Woods? Far from it. Even so, the Feb. 23 images of his crumpled SUV and seeing him Friday in golf attire taking full swings and holing putts was no less remarkable. "It was just awesome to be back out there playing and being out there with my son," Woods said. They are the featured attraction at the 36-hole event that pairs parents and children, just like last year, with one big difference. A year ago, there was enormous appeal getting a look at the young son of the 15-time major champion. Now it's all about the father.

—Associated Press



Jackson State head coach Deion Sanders has the Tigers in the Celebration Bowl in his second season. MATTHEW HINTON/AP

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Bowl season gets rolling

Middle Tennessee, Toledo kick things off in Bahamas

Associated Press

Freshman Nick Vattiatto threw for 270 yards and two touchdowns, including a 59-yard scoring pass to Jarrin Pierce with 6:24 left, and Middle Tennessee beat Toledo 31-24 on Friday in the Bahamas Bowl.

Two plays after Toledo's 32-yard punt, Vattiatto connected with a wide-open Pierce along the right side for a 28-17 lead. The 59-yard play was the longest completion in Middle Tennessee's bowl history.

On Toledo's next possession, quarterback Dequan Finn was pressured by Jordan Ferguson and defensive lineman Zaylin Wood intercepted a tipped pass, leading to a 35-yard field goal for a 31-17 lead.

Toledo got within seven points with 1:08 remaining, but Thomas Cluckey recovered an onside kick to secure it.

"Winning a bowl game, you're a champion, you're Bahamas Bowl champion and these seniors, these guys, they can take that with them the rest of their lives," Middle Tennessee coach Rick Stockstill said after his 101st

victory with the program.

Pierce caught four passes for 114 yards and Ferguson had a sack to reach nine on the season for Middle Tennessee (7-6), which was a double-digit underdog. Mike DiLiello rushed for 44 yards, including a 17-yard score to put the Blue Raiders ahead for good at 21-17.

Wood's interception was Middle Tennessee's 17th of the season, extending their national lead in turnovers gained to 32.

Finn was 18-of-39 passing for 212 yards with two touchdowns and one interception for Toledo (7-6). Finn broke free for a 40-yard touchdown run on fourth and 1 to tie it at 7.

Matt Landers, a Georgia transfer, set a Bahamas Bowl record with a 90-yard touchdown catch to put Toledo ahead 14-7. On first down at the 10, Finn threw it deep over the middle that Landers tipped to himself with an outstretched left arm and coasted into the end zone.

"Winning a bowl game, you're a champion, you're Bahamas Bowl champion and these seniors, these guys, they can take that with them the rest of their lives," Middle Tennessee coach Rick Stockstill said after his 101st

recording of Anderson's discussion with the team surfaced shortly before Utah State was set to face Oregon State in the inaugural Jimmy Kimmel LA Bowl on Saturday. Utah State University has said it was investigating the comments.

one of the top-rated players in the country when he came out of high school after the 2020 season, transferred to Texas.

Utah State coach apologizes for sexual assault comment: Utah State football coach Blake Anderson has apologized for telling his players it "has never been more glamorized to be the victim" of sexual assault.

Anderson issued the apology Friday after making the comments during a conversation with the team during fall camp.

"In the course of that conversation, I used a phrase regarding victims of wrongdoing to magnify that message to our team, but after reading my comments in the transcript that was released, I realize my choice of words was hurtful," Anderson said in a statement. "I regret the words I used, and I apologize to anyone who has bravely come forward with allegations of wrongdoing."

A recording of Anderson's discussion with the team surfaced shortly before Utah State was set to face Oregon State in the inaugural Jimmy Kimmel LA Bowl on Saturday. Utah State University has said it was investigating the comments.

Today's bowl games Capsules by The Associated Press



BOCA RATON BOWL
Appalachian State (10-3) vs. Western Kentucky (8-5)
11 a.m., ESPN
Key matchup: Mountaineers enter bowl season ranked 12th in pass defense efficiency, while no team has thrown for more yards than Western Kentucky.

CELEBRATION BOWL
South Carolina State (6-5) vs. Jackson State (11-1)
Noon, ABC
Key matchup: UTEP receiver South Carolina State QB Corey Fields Jr. vs. Jackson State's defense. The Tigers, with one of the top-ranked units in FCS, will try to force Fields into some costly mistakes.

NEW MEXICO BOWL
UTEP (7-5) vs. Fresno State (9-3)
2:15 p.m., ESPN
Key matchup: UTEP receiver Jacob Cowing lining up against Fresno State defensive back Evan Williams should bring marquee attention. Cowing had 67 catches to three consecutive bowls.

INDEPENDENCE BOWL
BYU (10-2) vs. UAB (8-4)
3:30 p.m., ABC
Notable: The Cougars, who have been competing as an independent since 2011, will join the Big 12 Conference for the 2023-24 season. UAB program was reinstated in 2017 and went to three consecutive bowls.

LENDING TREE BOWL
Eastern Michigan (7-5) vs. Liberty (7-5)
5:45 p.m., ESPN
Key matchup: Eastern Michigan's secondary against Liberty QB Malik Willis, a threat as a passer and as a runner. The Flames have a group of receivers led by Demario Douglas and CJ Daniels.

LA BOWL
Utah State (10-3) vs. Oregon State (7-5)
7:30 p.m., ABC
Key matchup: Utah State WR Deven Thompkins vs. Oregon State DB Rejzohn Wright. Thompkins ranks second in the FBS with a school-record 1,589 yards receiving.

NEW ORLEANS BOWL
Louisiana-Lafayette (12-1) vs. Marshall (7-5)
9:15 p.m., ESPN
Notable: Ragin' Cajuns come in with 12 straight victories and their first-ever outright Sun Belt Conference title. Thundering Herd will play their second-ever game in the Superdome.

RAIDERS (6-7) at Browns (7-6)
Monday, 5 p.m. Line: Raiders by 1. O/U: 40 1/2.
Nightmare scenario for Browns, with coach Kevin Stefanski and quarterback Baker Mayfield among a slew of positive COVID tests. **Raiders 24, Browns 20**

Vikings (6-7) at Bears (4-9)
Monday, 8:15 p.m. Line: Vikings by 5 1/2. O/U: 44.
Vikings are fairly solid — Dalvin Cook is back, Justin Jefferson is on a hot streak, Kirk Cousins is accurate — and the Bears just aren't good. Anything can happen in a division game, but this is a mismatch. **Vikings 27, Bears 17**

Washington (6-7) at Eagles (6-7)
Tuesday, 7 p.m. Line: Eagles by 7 1/2. O/U: 41 1/2.
Philadelphia has won three of four and put a lot of points on the board, but it's hard to know how good the Eagles really are. **Eagles 23, Washington 20**

Seahawks (5-8) at Rams (9-4)
Tuesday, 7 p.m. Line: Rams by 5 1/2. O/U: 45 1/2.
The Rams typically play Seattle well, and Aaron Donald historically has found a way to get to quarterback Russell Wilson. **Rams 33, Seahawks 20**

MOTORING

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Tesla goes sci-fi with Plaid

Automaker pushes limits of speed and technology with new Model S

By Henry Payne

The Detroit News

When Spaceball One hits Plaid speed in Mel Brooks' classic "Star Wars" spoof, "Spaceballs," the space ship shakes like a tin can, the engines scream, the crew cowers, and the evil Dark Helmet (played by the incomparable Rick Moranis in a sendup of Darth Vader) yells: "What have I done? My brains are going into my feet!"

The 2022 Tesla Model S Plaid isn't quite so harrowing. Though I think my brains did bounce off the back of my skull.

I took the Plaid out onto M1 Concourse's Champion Motor Speedway this week to experience the world's new standard for speed. Zero-60 mph in sub-two seconds, 1,020 horsepower, 9.23-second quarter mile at 156 mph. For comparison, the fastest gas-powered car, the supercharged, 840-horse Dodge Challenger SRT Demon, hits 60 in 2.3 seconds — and the quarter in 9.65. In cold, 30-degree temps on a damp December track, I couldn't match Tesla's claimed 1.99-second 0-60 sprint, achieved in optimal California conditions.

But I did manage a series of 2 1/2-second, launch-controlled, 0-60 runs that were a serenely violent experience.

Set Launch Control by matting the brake and accelerator pedals with (respectively) your left and right feet. Release the brake. Holy Mother of Mercy.

The Model S Plaid briefly recoiled as if it been hit by a bolt of lightning. The instrument display lit up with "Spaceballs"-like orange Plaid graphics. Then the Tesla exploded forward, the tri-motors' instant, 1,050 pound-feet-of-electric-torque silently crushing my spine into the seat back. According to the data crunchers at Motor Trend, Plaid generates 1.00 g-load at launch, peaking at 1.23-g at 32 mph.

Sixty mph blew by in a snap, but Plaid didn't stop there, hitting 120 mph in about seven seconds — or about the time it takes a Nissan Leaf EV to hit 60.

"Just stop this thing! I order you! Stooooop!" yells Dark



The 2022 Tesla Model S Plaid. HENRY PAYNE/THE DETROIT NEWS PHOTOS

Helmet as he holds on for dear life in "Spaceballs."

But as the end of M1's back straight rushed up, I simply hit the Plaid's big brakes and the sedan rotated beautifully into the long, 150-degree Turn 7 sweeper.

Another data point? Plaid not only shattered Motor Trend's

acceleration records, it went from 0-to-100-and-back-to-0 again in 8.2 seconds, beating the McLaren Senna supercar by 0.3 seconds.

Tesla CEO Elon Musk is obviously a "Spaceballs" fan and Plaid has always been the goal of the Tesla's flagship Model S. But Model S' performance long ago reset expectations for EVs.

In 2012, the standard, \$70K

Model S wowed with 5.1-second

0-60 acceleration and 240-mile

range. The Silicon Valley auto-

maker relentlessly improved the

formula, introducing more capa-

ble, more costly all-wheel-drive

models. In 2015, Tesla dropped the

Model S P90D with Ludi-

cious mode — a reference, natch,

to the speed Spaceballs One hits

before Plaid.

I tested Ludicrous six years ago and it made me lightheaded, so instant was the torque. It was a Cedar Point roller-coaster ride, and you could do it over and over and over. Zero-60: 2.8 seconds.

Now comes Plaid — nearly 30%

quicker.

Credit those three carbon-

sleeved motors driving the

wheels (up from two), more

efficient battery pack and fatter

9.5-10.5-inch tires front/rear

under enlarged fenders.

But Tesla has always been

about much more than straight-

line speed. Musk and his elves are

about rethinking the automobile

(no coincidence Model S badg-

ing echoes the revolutionary Ford

Model T of a century ago). And

legacy automakers are paying

attention.

Tesla also captured the popular

imagination with its iPhone-sim-

ple interior — 17-inch screen,

over-the-air updates, Autopilot

driver-assist capability.

Desperate to catch the Ameri-

can car company that has been

eating their lunch the last decade

(something Detroit premium

makers struggled to do), German

makers have brought out the big

guns with EVs like the Porsche

Taycan, Mercedes EQS and Audi

e-tron GT.

Your move, Tesla. If Model

S' exterior plays it safe (subtle

changes include front/rear face

tucks and rear Plaid badge), the

interior does anything but. Where

brand halos usually set the line-

up's tone, Model S takes its design

cues from its popular Model 3

junior sibling.

The signature 17-inch center

screen has been flipped to land-

scape mode against a simple

horizontal dash (secluded air

vents and all) like the Model 3

I've owned for three years. Unlike

3, S still features an instrument

display, now more subtly inte-

grated into the dash.

What's really daring in the

2022 Model S is the yoke steering

wheel.

Obsessed about pushing the

envelope, Tesla has adopted a

wheel more common to game

consoles and Formula One

Racing. Dude, round is sooo 15

minutes ago.

The design improves instru-

ment-display visibility (see

that Plaid light show) and is

easy to use on track. But it takes

getting used-to around parking

lots and other tight turns typi-

cally negotiated by rotating the

wheel hand-over-hand. I found

myself learning one-handed

driving in tight situations like a

baton twirler. If Tesla introduced

one-pedal regenerative driving,

why not one-hand steering?

The Model 3's clever, multi-

functional scroll orbs are now

the heart of the Model S yoke.

But Musk & Co. continue to push

boundaries by striking the shift

and turn signal stalks. Shifting

between park, drive and reverse is

now done by a screen slider, turn

signals by wheel-based buttons.

The latter can be maddening.

Cruising along I-75, I actu-

ated Navigate on Autopilot with

a simple press of the scroll orb —

then automatically changed lanes

with the turn-signal button.

At the limits, no one can

compete with the Porsche Taycan

for handling talent, but Plaid

makes a good effort with its state-

of-the-art adaptive suspension.

In COMFORT mode, I floated

above Detroit's pocked streets.

In PLAID mode, the Model S

crouched low — hugging M1

Concourse's turns despite wintry

conditions.

Overcooking it into Turn 9, I

caught the Plaid's rear end easily,

the car's electronics helping herd

its 4,677-pound girth back into

line.

The first significant make-

over of the Model S in a decade,

Plaid once more raises the bar

for luxury performance. With

its unmatched Supercharger

network, shocking speed,

predictable handling and lead-

ing-edge tech, it's the most

ambitious sedan in the world. No

doubt, its price is only attainable

to a few. But at \$134,490, it is not

only \$50,000 cheaper than the

comparable Porsche Taycan or

Merc EQS, it's \$5K less than the

P90D I drove in 2015.

Tesla has gone Plaid, and the

competition is still catching up.

Toyota Auto Insurance coming to more states

By Maria Halkias
The Dallas Morning News

Toyota wants to sell you a car, finance it, service it and now insure it too.

Toyota Auto Insurance is up and running in Arizona, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and South Carolina.

Along with Texas, it will soon be operating in Georgia, Missouri and Tennessee with more states added monthly, Toyota said Dec. 10.

Other vehicles in a

household that aren't Toyota brands can also be insured.

To make its insurance product stand out among the crowded choices already available, Toyota is offering a 5% discount on repairs at its certified collision centers that it said will be made with Toyota genuine parts "whenever possible."

The auto insurance will be sold through its website, mobile app, call center agents and at participating

Toyota dealerships. The insurance is supported by Toggle, the underwriter owned by Farmers Insurance.

Will Nicklas, chief operating officer of Toyota Insurance Management Solutions, said the program will be expanded so that Toyota owners can use their personal driving data to receive more discounts.

Toyota Insurance was started in 2016 first to help car buyers shop for insurance coverage.

Since then, the full-service agency has expanded to sell home, renters, recreational vehicle and pet insurance.

Employees walk by the lobby area at Toyota Motors North America in Plano, Texas, in 2018. Toyota has begun selling auto insurance in some states.



PORSCHE

REVIEW

Cayman GTS sings sweet music for sports car purist

By Henry Payne

The Detroit News

In this age of rapid technological change, we crave analog experiences. We enjoy unplugged instrumental music. Or cozying up with a page-turning novel rather than a digital Kindle. In the auto world, the normally aspirated, rear-wheel-drive manual sports car is the purist's choice. MX-5 Miata, Mustang GT, Subaru BRZ.

The summit of the art form is the Porsche Cayman GTS.

With its howling 394-horsepower flat-6 engine amidships, six-speed manual shifter and tight chassis, it is the Stradivarius of pure automotive instruments. On the writhing roads west of Hell, Michigan, the Cayman proved why you have to take this thoroughbred out of the city to fully realize its potential.

Hadley Road swells and dips like a roller-coaster with blind turns and long straightaways. The Cayman GTS stuck to every undulation like a fly to flypaper. Its steering is telepathic, hitting my marks — the front and rear ends a symphony of balance.

Speaking of symphonies, the six-cylinder chambers breathe in natural air like God intended — no turbos or superchargers here — then exhale through twin

2021 Porsche Cayman GTS

Mid-engine, rear-wheel-drive two-passenger sports car

Price: \$88,150, including

\$1,350 destination fee (\$100,990 as tested)

Powerplant: 4.0-liter

Boxer flat-6 cylinder

Power: 394 horsepower,

309 pound-feet of torque

Transmission:

6-speed manual

Performance: 0-60 mph,

4.3 seconds (mfr);

top speed, 182 mph

Weight: 3,042 pounds

Fuel economy: EPA,

17 mpg city/24 highway/

19 combined

pipes with a passionate wail.

Like listening to Springsteen belt the chorus of "Born to Run," I kept the volume on high — habitually driving a gear lower so I could maintain revs over 3,000 RPM.

Yet even as the Cayman GTS has achieved iconic status, it is under assault on multiple fronts.

The greatest threat are government killjoys who aim to strangle the flat-6's vocal chords. In order to meet increasingly restrictive global emissions rules, Cayman had to downsize to four pistons in 2017 — resorting to the turbo-charger to maintain power.

Robbed of the six's siren call, customers went elsewhere and U.S. Cayman

sales dropped by half in 2019. Under Communist China's strict mandates, the 4-banger is all that's available, but in the U.S., Porsche heard customer demand and rallied to offer the flat-6 where possible.

The result is the GTS and Cayman GT4 models, which represent the mid-engine terror's rebel soul.

Chevy's Corvette has gone mid-engine, too, putting its own heavenly, naturally aspirated V-8 soundtrack just behind your right ear. The V-8 is no-less addicting than the Cayman's flat-6, and designers nailed the car's proportions on their first try — bringing the 'Vette's signature sharp design cues in contrast to the Cayman's spare, bullet shape.

The 'Vette dropped a rung on purists' wish list when it sacrificed its manual transmission for its eighth-gen car. But it's no great loss, as the last-gen Corvette C7 manual was a mushy, three-gated 7-speed that often left drivers with a bag of neutrals.

The Porsche is crisp, notchy — gear changes require nothing more than a flick of the wrist.

It's pure sports car.

Porsche has crafted an icon, a classic that will be more appreciated over time as a benchmark for handling and gas-powered performance.

Family bonding over car talk



Bob Weber
Motormouth

Q: I have an Uncle Allen in DeKalb, Illinois, in his early 90s, who reads your column in the Chicago Tribune. The unknown benefit of your column is that Allen not only reads the articles, but he cuts them out and sends them to me. We have a standing call every

Wednesday night and many times your article is discussed. It brings up some type of question he has regarding your article. I am a retired engineer and find your articles interesting and humorous. We have not been face-to-face for two years now, so it's one way we keep our minds working. Thanks and please continue with your informative articles.

— G.H., Charles City, Iowa

A: I am accustomed to dealing with things mechanical, but your message revved up my soft subsystem. In this holiday season, I wish you and all my readers peace and happy motoring. Thanks.

Q: Can you recommend a particular brand or style of tire gauge that you feel is the most reliable and accurate? It seems that almost all of the ones I have owned have not worked that well. I have only owned the pencil-style ones. Are the digital style gauges worth the extra money?

— B.B., Canton, Connecticut

A: Tire pressure is a squishy subject. You want to have the correct pressure, but it need not be correct to a tenth of a psi. I have used, and continue to use, pencil gauges. I also have dial gauges and digital gauges. When I



MARK HERREID/DREAMSTIME

compare readings among them, they are pretty close. Digital gauges' accuracy is, however, the most consistent over the life of the gauge. The only place I know of where guys become inflation fanatics is the drag strip.

Q: Like many people this time of year, I have some small engine gasoline mix (40:1 or 50:1) left in a gas can. I use 89 octane for the mix. Can I add the leftover mixed gas to my 4-cylinder car when it has about three-quarters of a tank of regular 87 octane?

— N.P., Westchester, Illinois

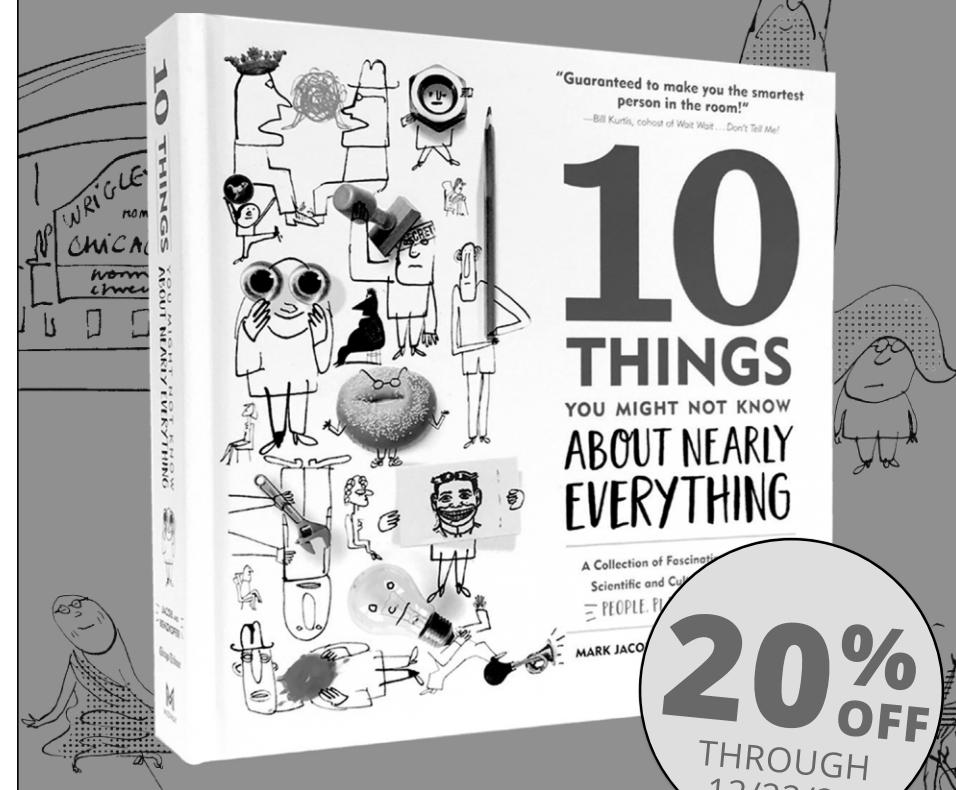
A: Wow, a gas question, then a tire question and now a combination of the two. Is that a hat trick? Yes, put some Sta-Bil in the gas and bring the cold tire pressure up and add a couple psi. Replace your trickle charger with a smart charger that floats the charge that won't harm the battery. Until last year, my 92-year-old mom had a ZO6 Vette in her garage. Granted, it was the neighbor's, but she looked way cool standing next to it.

Bob Weber is a writer and mechanic who became an ASE-certified Master Automobile Technician in 1976. He maintains this status by seeking certification every five years. Weber's work appears in professional trade magazines and other consumer publications. His writing also appears in automotive trade publications, Consumer Guide and Consumers Digest. Send questions along with name and town to motormouth. tribune@gmail.com.



"Early detection gave us more time to find information and support together."

If you're noticing changes, it could be Alzheimer's. Talk about visiting a doctor together.



FACT #341

The folks who brought us Reddi-wip

whipped cream had another brainstorm

in the 1960s: Reddi-Bacon.



10 Things You Might Not Know About Nearly Everything

contains a plethora of tidbits and trivia that will appeal to everyone, from history buffs to sports fans to foodies. From lighthearted topics such as misspellings and extreme eating, to serious subjects such as WWII and prison, this book leaves readers brighter and wittier than ever before.

FACT #84: A cardigan worn by a man is sometimes called a mandigan.

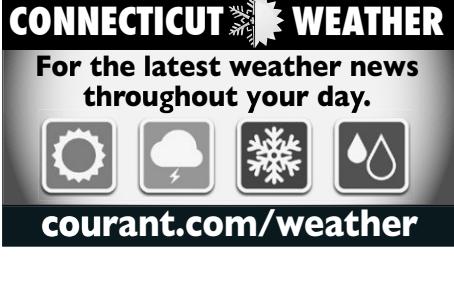
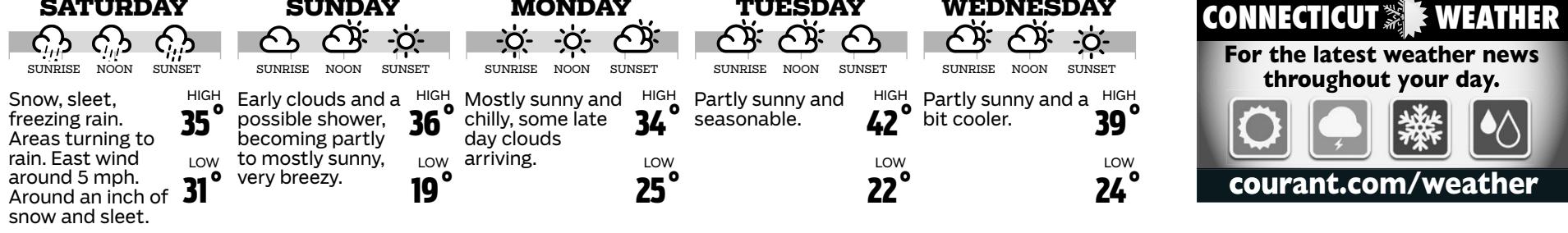
FACT #178: Genophobia is the fear of knees.

FACT #238: Actress Marilyn Monroe colored her hair using a shade of blond called dirty pillow slip.

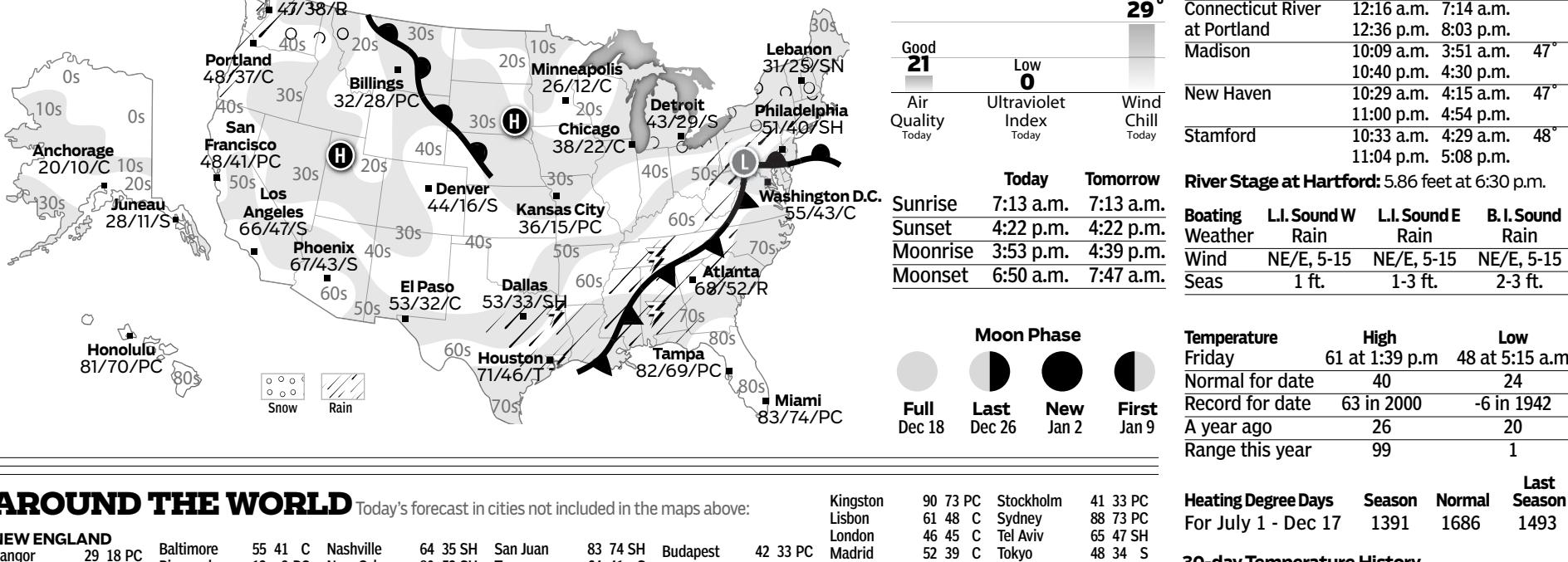
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Smoky sips

Create these cocktails without a single ember

By Rebekah Peppler
The New York Times

Smoking in crowded bars may mostly (and happily) be a relic of the past, but the cocktail glass itself hasn't lost all elements of smoke — often imparted by ingredient alone. Many fall in one of two smokiness camps: You like — insert Scotch or mezcal here — or you don't.

But the characteristics of smoke in drinks don't have to hit one over the head to be effective; rather they can be subtle and nuanced. Stocking your bar with a few foundational bottles of smoky-leaning spirits offers access to drinks that range from refreshing and bright to earthy, herbal and vegetal.

Start with mezcal, a spirit distilled from the agave plant. As with wine, a pour of small-scale mezcal provides direct connection to its terroir. "It almost tastes like you're outside; you can taste the soil," said Yola Jimenez, founder of Yola Mezcal. "That's my favorite part: It really tastes like the land."

The layered flavors, including smokiness, in every bottle of mezcal vary by region, variety and producer, and their complexity

Mezcal Fresca
uses allspice
dram
and hibiscus
syrup
for a tart and
smoky drink.

Mezcal Fresca

Makes: 1 drink
For the hibiscus syrup:
1 cup dried hibiscus blossom, also called flor de jamaica
1 cup sugar
1 teaspoon smoked flaky salt
For the cocktail:
Ice
1 1/2 ounces mezcal
1/2 ounce hibiscus syrup



1/2 ounce allspice dram
1/2 ounce fresh grapefruit juice
1/4 ounce fresh lime juice
Soda water, for finishing
1. Make the hibiscus syrup: In a saucepan, combine hibiscus blossoms and 1 cup water, and bring to a simmer over medium heat. Add sugar and salt, stir to dissolve, then turn off heat and allow to cool completely. Strain through a fine mesh sieve, pressing on the solids

The Bitterscotch cocktail pairs Scotch and vermouth with an amaro. Whether you're smoke-averse or all-in on them, these cocktails will satisfy. DAVID MALOSH/THE NEW YORK TIMES PHOTOS

Bitterscotch

Makes: 1 drink
1 1/2 ounces Scotch
1 ounce blanc vermouth
3/4 ounce amaro
1/2 ounce fresh lemon juice
Ice

Lemon peel, for serving
In a shaker: combine the Scotch, blanc vermouth, amaro and lemon juice. Add ice, cover and shake vigorously until the drink is well chilled, about 15 seconds. Strain into a chilled cocktail glass. Holding a lemon peel by its long edges, skin facing down into the glass, pinch the peel to release the citrus oils. Add it to the glass and serve.

is a result of techniques used for hundreds of years. The intrinsic smoke flavor forms during the process of roasting the agave hearts, or piñas, before they are crushed and fermented. The sweet, fiery smell that permeates the air during cooking also infuses into the final distillate, capturing the plant's herbaceous essence.

Each variety of agave used to make mezcal also has its own distinct flavor. For Yola Mezcal, Jimenez follows one of her grandfather's recipes, a blend of organic espadín (a cultivated variety of agave that takes roughly seven years to mature) and a smaller percentage of madrecuixe, a wild, distinctively tall and cylindrical agave — "because we felt it had that right balance of sweetness, smokiness and complexity," she said.

Before you mix a drink, pour some mezcal on its own. "For me, the smokiness disappears quite quickly after the first sip," Jimenez said.

Keep drinking as-is or mix your next few ounces into a cocktail. Combine the spirit with sweet hibiscus syrup and allspice dram for a Mezcal Fresca, a drink that's tart, smoky and spiced.

Or soften Scotch's smoky edges with white vermouth and amaro in a Bitterscotch. Choose a lighter, sweeter amaro or, should your smoke tolerance be higher, double down with Amaro Sfumato Rabarbaro, a smoky, alpine amaro made in northern Italy. And, if you're on a tight timeline, combine equal parts Amaro Sfumato Rabarbaro and sweet vermouth over ice, and start drinking.

Whichever bottle you choose, smoke-leaning cocktails hit that sweet spot between smoking jacket and cigar, and suit a wide variety of palates — no lingering haze necessary.



These cakey chocolate chip cookies from Lidia Bastianich have a secret ingredient: ricotta cheese. **GRETCHEN MCKAY/PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE PHOTOS**

Chocolate chip ricotta cookies

Lidia Bastianich gives an all-American favorite Italian flair in this cakey cookie recipe with ricotta cheese. Even my daughter, Catherine, who professes to detest ricotta, loved how it makes the cookies soft and smooth.

Makes: 3 dozen cookies

1 stick unsalted butter, at room temperature

1 cup granulated sugar

2 large eggs

8 ounces fresh ricotta

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

2 teaspoons baking powder

Kosher salt

1 cup mini chocolate chips (or more to taste)

Confectioners' sugar for dusting, optional

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line two baking sheets with parchment.

2. Cream butter and sugar in a large bowl with a hand-held mixer on high speed until light and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Reduce speed to medium and add eggs. Beat until smooth. Add ricotta and vanilla and beat to combine.

3. Sift the flour and baking powder right into the bowl, and add a pinch of salt. Mix on low speed until just combined. Stir in chocolate chips by hand.

4. Drop cookies in heaping tablespoons onto the baking sheets, leaving about 2 inches between cookies, in three rows of five. Bake, rotating the trays from top to bottom halfway through, until cookies are puffed and golden at the edges, about 18 minutes. Remove to a wire rack to cool.

5. Dust cookies with confectioners' sugar before serving, if desired.

Skillet lasagna

Everyone loves lasagna, but a traditional recipe is tough to make on a weeknight. This skillet recipe comes together in about 45 minutes using oven-ready noodles.

For a heartier dish, Lidia suggests adding a few crumbled links of Italian sausage or browned mushrooms. If you don't like peas or simply want to veg it up, add a few handfuls of baby spinach to each layer. Be sure to allow it to sit for at least 15 minutes before serving, so the lasagna can more easily be cut into portions.

Makes: 4 servings

Extra-virgin olive oil, for coating skillet

3 1/4 cups marinara sauce, homemade or store-bought

1 cup fresh ricotta

1 cup shredded low-moisture mozzarella, divided

1/2 cup freshly grated Grana Padano

1 large egg, beaten

1/2 cup frozen baby peas

2 tablespoons chopped fresh Italian parsley

Kosher salt

Red pepper flakes

12 sheet no-boil (oven-ready) lasagna

1. Heat a large nonstick skillet over medium heat.

Add enough olive oil to make a thin film on the bottom of the skillet. Add 1 1/4 cups marinara with 1/4 cup water and bring to a simmer over medium heat.

2. In a bowl, combine ricotta, 1/2 cup mozzarella, 1/4 cup grated Grana Padano, egg, peas and parsley. Season with salt and a pinch of red pepper flakes, and mix well.

3. Layer three of the noodles in the skillet over the sauce.

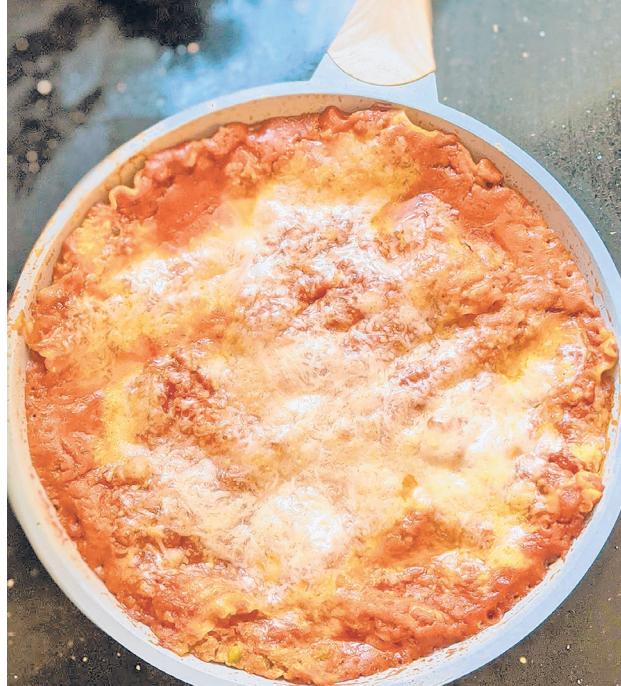
(I had to break the ends to fit.) Dollop 1/3 of the ricotta mixture on top of the pasta in the skillet, and spread it out to cover noodles; then drizzle with 1/4 cup of the tomato sauce. Make two more layers, ending with noodles. Drizzle with remaining 1 1/2 cups sauce.

Top with the remaining 1/2 cup mozzarella and 1/4 cup grated cheese.

4. Cover skillet and simmer until pasta is al dente (test by piercing the center with a paring knife), 20-25 minutes.

5. Preheat broiler. Sprinkle remaining 1/4 cup grated cheese on top and broil the lasagna until the top is nicely browned, about 1 minute.

6. Let sit for 15 minutes before cutting and serving so the lasagna will settle and portions can be cut more easily.



Oven-ready lasagna noodles are cooked in marinara on the stovetop with three cheeses in this one-pot pasta dish.



"Sometimes, you just want to cook something that doesn't leave you with a pile of dishes," Bastianich writes in her latest cookbook. **FILE**

poultry dishes.

You'll find a wide assortment of primi pasta and risotto dishes, which are the cornerstone of Italian cooking and perfectly suited for one-pot cooking: chicken eggplant Parmesan, gemelli with pesto and tomato, chicken cacciatore and zucchini bread lasagna, to name a few. There's also a recipe for pan pizza.

Ever the teacher, Bastianich sprinkles tips and tricks throughout, and also offers substitution and serving suggestions.

"It's for everybody, even the beginners," she says.

As for the cooking vessels themselves, the chef is quick to point out that her book takes an "expansive" view of one-pot cooking.

Some of the recipes actually require an extra bowl or plate during prep, cooking or plating.

Cooking, Bastianich says, should always be fun, welcoming and delicious, as well as an expression of your love and affection for the people around your table.

"I see the connection when people get together, and feel nourished in every way," she says.

She hopes her latest cookbook will help home cooks feel more comfortable in the kitchen while realizing that good cooking doesn't have to be complicated.

"It's all about the comfort zone," she says.

NO-FUSS DISHES

Lidia Bastianich keeps it simple in her latest cookbook

By Gretchen McKay | Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Cookbook author, TV host and celebrity chef Lidia Bastianich is one of the most famous Italian cooks in the U.S. She's also a successful restaurateur, with eight restaurants specializing in Italian and Italian-American cuisine.

Yet when she prepares meals for her own family at home, she's like the rest of us: She likes to keep it simple, with straightforward, no-fuss recipes that don't require impeccable technique or fancy ingredients.

Take cannellini beans, for instance. Found in every classic minestrone and many Italian salads, the white kidney-shaped legume can also add an inexpensive punch of protein to a plate of greens or make a fish dish more substantial.

"They are perfectly good and delicious from the can," Bastianich says on a recent phone call from her home in New York.

Using food right from a can or box (such as oven-ready dried pasta) also streamlines the cooking process while eliminating the pot and pans that tend to pile up with scratch cooking.

Her latest cookbook, "Lidia's a Pot, a Pan, and a Bowl" (Knopf, \$30), hit store shelves in October. It has 100-plus homey and easy-to-prepare recipes that require fewer steps and ingredients than her previous tomes, but still deliver incredible Italian flavor.

As she writes in the book's forward: "Sometimes, you just want to cook something that doesn't leave you with a pile of dishes."

This is Bastianich's 16th cookbook and arguably one of her most user-friendly, streamlined to be "as straightforward to cook as possible" and using a minimal number of pots and pans. It was born, she says, out of her desire to carry on her relationship with her fans, many of whom love to cook along with her on her various cooking programs at PBS Food and her YouTube channel,

Tutto Lidia. "I get this feedback, 'You make me feel so secure in my kitchen.' So I can't help myself. I think, 'What can I give them next so they stay in the kitchen?'"

While the theme of

simplicity will likely resonate with home cooks who churned out three meals a day at the height of the pandemic, Bastianich actually started work on the cookbook before the coronavirus shutdown. But much of the testing with her daughter and co-author,

Tanya Bastianich Manali, and longtime PBS culinary producer Amy Stevenson was done during quarantine in her home in Queens, New York.

"I have a large house," she says. "We opened all the windows and put the masks on and that was that. We worked around it."

She chose to focus on

one-pot dishes — meals made in a single skillet, Dutch oven, baking sheet or roasting pan — because the approach fits the busy times we live in. She also liked the creative challenge of creating simple, minimally messy dishes with layered, harmonizing flavors.

That meant eliminating as many chef secret techniques as possible, focusing on the timing and sequence of ingredients, and making cooks realize it's OK to substitute different vegetables or proteins to accommodate personal tastes and budget. For instance, she uses cod in a seafood dish instead of salmon or shrimp.

While fresh is always

better, the process of making dough from scratch takes time and practice.

Bastianich was surprised to find how well dishes turned out with pre-cooked

noodles and shells, so long as you make sure there is enough liquid in the baking

"It was fun to be able to use my years of experience in a commercial kitchen and traveling, and synthesize it down to a simple baking pan that everyone can relate to," she says.

The journey took her at

least one place she never thought she'd go: into the Italian food aisle for oven-ready lasagna noodles, which she turned into a knock-out skillet lasagna recipe that comes together in about 45 minutes.

Along with a chapter on

eggs, the cookbook dishes

up soup and salad recipies with an eye toward

seasonality. It also takes

a deep dive into seafood and unfamiliar fish such as monkfish, which she cooks with cannellini beans into a savory stew. There also

pan for the pasta to cook in the oven. She stuffs them with three cheeses, parsley and scallions.

The chef also tried her hand at Instant Pot cooking for the first time during the pandemic, and gives tips to readers willing to experiment with adapting some of the cookbook's recipes to the electric multicooker.

Almost all of the recipies can be served as a one-course meal. Many also could shine as an appetizer or side dish in a multi-course feast, or be portioned and frozen for a quick leftover dinner. All are Bastianich favorites that have their roots in the Italian cooking the chef is famous for.

As for the cooking vessels themselves, the chef is quick to point out that her book takes an "expansive" view of one-pot cooking.

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What makes a wine great?

By Eric Asimov
The New York Times

What makes a wine great? It's a question that has intrigued anybody who has ever enjoyed a glass and paused to think about why that might be so.

Greatness has classically been associated with wines that showed complexity and nuance, that were able to age and evolve over many years, that touched the emotions, inspired contemplation and provoked discussion.

Great wines are thought to express a sense of place. That is, their distinctive characters are formed by the soil and its microbial life, climate, elevation and angle of inclination to the sun, as well as the culture that produced it.

At the least, all great wines ought to be balanced and harmonious, and they need to be refreshing.

That's just for a start. Wine lovers can go on ad nauseam discussing the subject, debating what constitutes balance and harmony. They can quickly move to ideas like objectivity and subjectivity; that is, whether the quality of a wine exists independently of one's perception of it.

It can quickly become philosophical, touching on questions that transcend wine, like "What is art?" and "What is beauty?"

I'm not a philosopher. Nor do I claim to know the answers to these questions — though I certainly have opinions. But I have been thinking about what makes a wine great, on my own and in discussions held over the last few years by Aereni, a kind of wine think tank that engages in conversations with people from all walks of the wine world.

Aereni's focus has been on

how to define "fine wine," which is perhaps a more nebulous phrase. I prefer "great wine," as I think the phrase connotes something extraordinary more clearly. "Fine wine" is more of an industry term often used by marketers to mean an expensive wine.

While I don't dispute the components of the classic definition of a great wine, I have come to think that its use is limited. Great wines ought to have a sense of place, and they ought to refresh. But the sorts of wines that are age-worthy and develop complexity tend to be rare and increasingly expensive, and few people have access to them.

These sorts of bottles represent a tiny fraction of what's produced and consumed. At the same time, many people experience greatness in wines that don't necessarily fall under the classic definition.

I know I do.

What I've come to believe is that greatness is not limited to only these transcendent, classically great bottles. Rather, greatness in a wine is defined by its ability to meet the needs of a particular occasion.

Can a wine be considered great if a producer pays no mind to social justice and environmental responsibility? Not to me. A producer who exploits workers, who abuses the environment or adds irresponsibly to the carbon footprint cannot make great wine.

If great wine expresses the culture and people who produced it, this must be the case. We are way past the time when all that mattered was what was in the glass.

On certain occasions, context is theoretical.

"Sometimes a great Beaujolais is a better choice than La Tâche," a friend once said to me years ago,



Greatness in a wine is defined by its ability to meet the needs of a particular occasion.
JASON RAISH/THE NEW YORK TIMES

referring to the grand cru Burgundy from Domaine de la Romanée-Conti, one of the rarest, most expensive and highly prized wines in the world.

Few people would argue that any Beaujolais has the potential to be more profound than La Tâche. Most would leap at any opportunity to merely taste La Tâche because of its scarcity and its cost — a bottle of the 2017, if you can find one, might sell for around \$5,000. I know I would.

But a wine like La Tâche, particularly for one who

does not have a ready supply, demands a certain amount of ceremony and freedom from distraction to do it justice. I'd ideally want to share it with people I love. I could drink Beaujolais with anybody, and we'd be friends in 20 minutes. That's beauty in its own right.

Unlike a painting or sculpture, wine and food are transitory. They exist as potential until they are consumed, after which they live on in memory. In a sense, the greatest wines may be those that are most memorable.

For me, the most memorable constitute a motley collection. In the classical hierarchy, many of them fall into the modest category: a Barbera d'Alba, a Mosel kabinett riesling, a red Burgundy from the Hautes-Côte de Nuits.

Why have I retained these memories? Because each of these bottles represented a crucial turning point for me in my personal journey with wine, opening doors that I had not known existed.

I've had memorable moments with bottles that would be considered

grand — a 30-year-old 1955 La Mission Haut-Brion, my first encounter with a wine that had aged into a beautiful state over decades; an imperial of 1986 Lafite-Rothschild that answered the question of when the right time is to open a bottle; a 1959 Inglenook cabernet sauvignon, which demonstrated an alternative to the path that Napa Valley then seemed to be on; a 1988 Gentaz-Dervieux Côte-Rôtie, a wine born in rustic circumstances that nonetheless was hauntingly beautiful.

Yet simpler wines continue to resonate with me because they have so much to teach. Wines like a retsina from Greece, consumed in a casual restaurant in San Francisco; a silvaner from Alsace I had at a lunch in New York; a manzanilla at an outdoor seafood restaurant in San Lúcar de Barrameda, Spain — each of these bottles was perfect in the moment and everlasting in memory.

Most recently, in September my wife and I traveled to Brussels to visit our son Peter. He's been in Europe for seven years, and we hadn't seen him for almost two because of the pandemic. We celebrated our reunion at Le Pigeon Noir in the Uccle neighborhood, an uncomplicated bistro that makes exquisite renditions of familiar French and Belgian dishes.

We drank a village Burgundy, a 2017 Marsannay from Domaine Trapet, a modest wine that was perfect for this meal — delicious enough to briefly note its qualities before moving on to other subjects.

Might we all have appreciated a spectacular classic? Of course, if I could have afforded one. But it might have been the center of attention, robbing the evening of its purpose, which was to focus on one another and to catch up. On this occasion, the Marsannay was a great wine, offering moments of grace without requiring the spotlight. It was the best wine for the occasion.

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Good creamed spinach a revelation

By Meghan Splawn
TheKitchn.com

There are two types of people in the world: people who love creamed spinach and people who haven't had good creamed spinach yet. Fortunately, I fall into the former and plan to convert everyone into the latter.

That's because good creamed spinach is nothing like the spinach you find wilting in a buffet tray. Good creamed spinach is pure luxury for your taste buds. It's tender cooked spinach swathed in a gentle sauce of aromatics and fresh spices, with just enough creamy half-and-half and grated Parmesan cheese to hold the leaves together in an irresistibly savory sauce.

The best spinach for creamed spinach

Fresh baby spinach is best for making creamed spinach. Because it is already tender and less bitter than full-grown spinach, it requires less cooking and adds a creaminess to the finished dish. I also prefer to use baby spinach, as most bagged varieties are 10 ounces, which is the perfect amount for this recipe. If you've got full-sized leaves, feel free to use them — just chop them into bite-sized pieces before proceeding.

Can you use frozen spinach instead of fresh?

Yes! Thaw a 10-ounce package of frozen spinach and drain well. Make the cream sauce and add the thawed and drained spinach until heated through.

Cooking the spinach for creamed spinach

The spinach for creamed spinach needs to be cooked before making the cream sauce. Blanching, a quick dip in boiling water followed by a cool ice bath, is the preferred method for locking in color and tenderizing the spinach. You could sauté or even steam the spinach, but I've found that blanching cooks faster and more evenly — especially if you are cooking a large batch of spinach.

However, since both the boiling and the ice bath make the spinach wet, this moisture needs to be



Fresh baby spinach is best for making creamed spinach, but frozen works, too. LAUREN VOLO/THEKITCHN.COM.

squeezed off to ensure a creamy, not watery, creamed spinach. Use the same colander you drained the spinach in to press out the excess moisture before adding the spinach to the cream sauce.

Do I really have to cook the spinach first?

The short answer is "yes." You might be thinking, "Oh, the spinach will just wilt in the cream sauce; I don't really need to cook it first." Unfortunately, having thought the same thing myself, I have found the cooking and draining of the spinach before making the cream sauce to be critical. The spinach releases more water than you might think

and makes a soupy, rather than creamy, sauce.

No cream in creamed spinach

You were expecting cream in this recipe or maybe even cream cheese, but both of these ingredients make for a dense, rather than smooth and creamy, creamed spinach. Instead, a combination of half-and-half and grated Parmesan cheese make a sauce that is both luxuriously creamy and still light. You could certainly try another hard, salty cheese here, such as Pecorino Romano or an aged manchego if you have either of those on hand.

As for the other flavorings, onions and garlic are quintes-

sential creamed spinach aromatics, but you can play around a bit with the dried spices. I love a little nutmeg (brings out the nuttiness of the cheese), and the dry mustard and cayenne make the dish taste brighter with their touch of acidity. But you can certainly skip or substitute any of these as desired.

Can you thicken creamed spinach?

This creamed spinach is thickened with the help of a little flour, which is sprinkled over the onion mixture before the half-and-half is added. You'll then cook the mixture until it thickens enough to coat the back of the spatula.

Creamed spinach

Makes: 4 servings
10 ounces baby spinach
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 tablespoons grated yellow onion
2 teaspoons minced garlic
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 cup half-and-half
½ cup finely grated Parmesan cheese
¼ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
½ teaspoon dry mustard
Pinch of cayenne pepper
½ teaspoon kosher salt
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1. Cook the spinach. Bring a 4-quart pot of salted water to a boil. Add the spinach in large handfuls until all the spinach is added, and cook for 15 seconds.

2. Drain pot of spinach in a colander in the sink and immediately run the spinach under cold water to halt the cooking. Shake as much of the water off the spinach as you can by shaking the colander.

3. Using your hands, press the spinach against the sides of the colander in large handfuls, squeezing to remove as much excess moisture as possible. Set aside to drain further while making the cream sauce.

4. Make the cream sauce. Melt the butter in a medium frying pan over medium-high heat. Add the onion and garlic, and cook for 1 minute. Sprinkle the flour over the onion mixture and cook, stirring frequently, for 3 minutes. Stir in the half-and-half. Cook the mixture, stirring slowly and continuously, until the sauce comes to a boil and thickens enough to coat the back of the spatula, about 5 minutes. Reduce the heat to low and continue cooking until the sauce is thickened, about 2 minutes more.

5. Stir in the cheese, nutmeg, mustard, cayenne, salt and pepper. Add the spinach and mix well. Keep warm over very low heat.

Notes: Instead of blanching fresh spinach, thaw a 10-ounce package of frozen spinach and drain well. You can make the creamed spinach up to one day ahead. Press plastic wrap or parchment paper directly onto the surface to prevent a skin from forming. Cool to room temperature and then refrigerate. When ready to proceed, remove the plastic wrap and reheat over low heat until it just begins to bubble.

Squash, carrots sweeten brothy cold-weather soup

By Kary Osmond
Tribune Content Agency

I love it when a recipe comes together. Sometimes, when I start building a recipe, I'm not always sure how it will end. That was the case with this soup recipe.

I started by prepping vegetables I had on hand. I knew I wanted a brothy soup with chunks of tender vegetables. I added

potatoes because I wanted a creamy texture to balance out the sweetness of the other vegetables, and I kept the recipe simple, only using bay leaves, salt and pepper to season the soup. Turns out, that's all it needed.

The soup has a delicious aroma and a sweet flavor from the carrots, onions and butternut squash. It's a perfect soup to ward off the chills.



The soup has a delicious aroma and a sweet flavor. KARY OSMOND/TNS

Vegetable soup

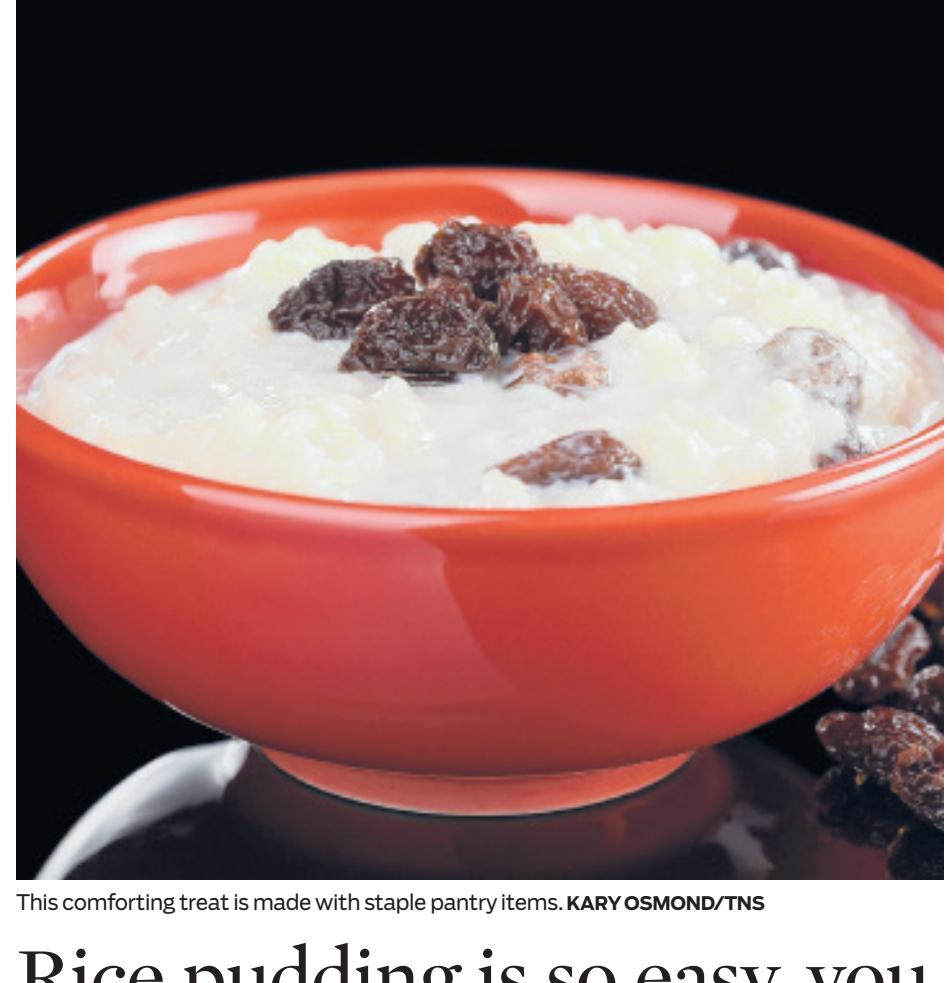
Makes: 4-6 servings
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 onion, finely chopped
1 large or 2 small carrots, peeled and diced into ½-inch pieces
2 garlic cloves, minced
½ butternut squash, peeled and diced into ¾-inch pieces
8 baby potatoes, quartered
1 (15-ounce) can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
4 cups of vegetable stock
1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon pepper
2 bay leaves
1. Place a large pot over medium heat. Add

olive oil, onion, carrots and garlic. Cook and stir until onions are translucent and soft, about 8 to 10 minutes.

2. Add butternut squash, potatoes, chickpeas, vegetable stock, salt, pepper and bay leaves. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to medium-low, partially cover and simmer gently for 25 to 30 minutes or until potatoes and butternut squash are tender.

3. Remove from heat. Discard bay leaves and season to taste with salt and pepper.

Notes: Cooked pearl barley, quinoa or brown rice can be added to thicken the soup. A splash of white wine added after the onions have softened will enhance the flavor of the soup. Add ¼ cup and allow to reduce for a few minutes before adding the butternut squash.



This comforting treat is made with staple pantry items. KARY OSMOND/TNS

Rice pudding is so easy, you could make it in the dark

By Kary Osmond
Tribune Content Agency

I have a vivid memory of my mom making rice pudding for me during a power outage when I was a kid. It was a simple dessert that she could make on our little gas stove in the dark to fill the time until the lights came back on.

If you've never had rice pudding before, it's a comforting treat made with staple pantry items, which is probably why it's so well loved and why my mom was able

to make it in the dark. This is a simple rice pudding recipe that you can build on and make your own.

Dried fruit is a common addition to rice pudding; it adds texture and flavor. Half-way through the gentle simmer, add a few tablespoons of raisins, chopped figs or chopped dates.

If you want a decadent rice pudding, try adding a little coconut milk in place for some of the oat milk. To add extra texture, try garnishing with toasted coconut, nuts or seeds.

Easy rice pudding

Makes: 2 to 3 servings
3 cups unsweetened oat milk

¼ cup cane sugar

¼ teaspoon salt

¼ cup long grain white rice

½ teaspoon vanilla

1. In a medium pot, combine milk, sugar and salt. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat.

2. Stir in rice, reduce heat to low. Cook, stirring often, until rice is soft and pudding has thickened to the consistency of yogurt, about 30 to 45 minutes.

3. Stir in vanilla. Serve warm or chilled.